

Hiawatha Rubber Bounces its Performance Upward



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Hiawatha Rubber Company (Hiawatha) is a manufacturer of rubber molded, high precision parts for every major industry including medical, aerospace, printing, and fluid power. Its primary manufacturing operations include compounding, milling, bonding, molding, grinding, and trimming. Hiawatha's products include seals, protective covers, close tolerance rollers, and a variety of custom over-mold applications. In addition, Hiawatha provides in-house chemistry expertise allowing the company to customize rubber formulations for critical customer applications.

Notably, Hiawatha Rubber supplies parts that are non-automotive and non-metal fabrication, which demonstrates Plex Online's ability to support a wide range of manufacturing companies.

The business challenge

The company's primary goal was to implement an integrated manufacturing business system that would help them streamline daily operations, capture shop floor data in real time, and gain visibility throughout operations. The new system would need to meet the following objectives:

- > Replace an antiquated, difficult to support, legacy AS/400 application
- > Eliminate various spreadsheets, offline databases, and paper files
- > Institute redesigned and ERP-driven production, scheduling, purchasing, and shipping processes
- > Overhaul the approach to product costing to better understand cost drivers and variable contribution margin

The company selected Plex Online to improve inventory control, scheduling, shipping, and costing. The cloud-based ERP solution would support the following Hiawatha business processes:

- > Sales quotation and order management
- > Manufacturing planning and scheduling
- > Purchasing
- > Inventory management
- > Quality management
- > Finance/accounting
- > Shipping/receiving
- > Human resources

The Baker Tilly solution

The consulting specialists at Baker Tilly employed their Plex Online Implementation Methodology to understand Hiawatha's business and assess the organization's ability to adopt change. The consultants leveraged their perspectives from other implementation and optimization projects to guide Hiawatha on configuring and utilizing Plex Online to best meet the company's unique requirements. In addition, the Baker Tilly team worked closely with the company to drive efficiencies into operating processes and to transfer knowledge to the core Hiawatha implementation team. This would help prepare the company to manage the business system going forward and to implement new system modules and configuration settings with minimal external guidance.

With Baker Tilly guiding the implementation, Hiawatha was able to meet their Plex Online and operational goals. Throughout the project, Baker Tilly gained an understanding of Hiawatha's unique manufacturing processes, and were able to make recommendations for improvement by leveraging standard Plex Online functionality. Hiawatha was able to strengthen key aspects of the business that create a competitive advantage in the marketplace.



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Business results

Hiawatha produces batches of specialized rubber compounds to meet the exacting specifications of their customers' products. Through its in-depth experience, Baker Tilly helped build the business process into Plex Online for laboratory testing and approving of each batch before introducing it into the production process.

Planning at Hiawatha used to involve the use of spreadsheets and a large degree of manual effort to set the daily schedule. With Plex Online, the company's process is now highly streamlined, consists of a few adjustments to the distribution list, and has resulted in more accurate planning.

The purchasing department now makes smarter buys because they have visibility not only into current customer orders, but also into the order pipeline and forecast as well. Hiawatha is now able to easily make adjustments in costing to respond to changes in customer requirements, process improvements, and materials costs. The company plans to create numerous, easy-to-understand user reports and to continue harnessing the wealth of data Plex Online provides.

Baker Tilly offers a specialized consulting team with deep vertical knowledge and exceptional Plex Online implementation and optimization skills. The firm's Consulting Practice applies best practice methodologies to organizational needs and successfully implements Software as a Service (SaaS) business solutions. Baker Tilly helps take out the complexity and risk of challenging software deployments. For success with Plex Online and other SaaS solutions, call the business technology team at 800 362 7301.

The Baker Tilly solution:

Implementation of an integrated manufacturing business system to streamline daily operations, while capturing shop floor manufacturing data in real-time, providing visibility throughout plant operations.

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