



Metalstamping Company Attributes Data Management Success to Plex



At a Glance:

- Read how this automotive metalstamper uses Plex to manage data for operations spanning the United States and Mexico.
- Hatch Stamping is now able to isolate performance metrics and financial data by plant.
- Barcoding capabilities enable more accurate parts tracking, improved inventory management, and higher productivity.
- Plex measures OEE, and generates data and reports to prevent, identify and solve production issues quickly.

About Hatch Stamping

Headquartered in Chelsea, Michigan, Hatch Stamping Company is a metal stampings manufacturer specializing in design, prototype construction, progressive die construction, stampings and assemblies for the automotive industry. It has plants in the United States and Mexico.

Strong values such as quality, exceptional customer service and integrity have led the company to achieve remarkable growth in recent years. Along with the growth came the need to evaluate existing technology solutions. Its antiquated DOS-based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system was not robust enough to handle the demands and goals of the company. After evaluating ERP solutions like QAD and SAP, Hatch chose Plex to integrate information from disparate databases under one user-friendly, simplified and accessible solution across the enterprise.

Plex not only provides leading-edge ERP support but combines the capabilities of ERP, manufacturing execution systems (MES), quality management, customer relationship management (CRM), shop-floor integration, and much more. Also, because Plex is a Cloud model, Hatch avoids the cost, hassles and business disruptions associated with new version upgrades. With Plex, there are never any new versions or security patches to install. Enhancements are made to the software on a real-time basis – frequently on a daily basis – at no additional cost.

Plex Creates Synergy Between User and Data

Like all manufacturers, Hatch relies on accurate and timely data to manage its performance. Complete integration of real-time operational data, collected from the shop floor to the top floor, is key for effective preventative maintenance, cost savings and lean manufacturing operations. About 50 percent of Hatch's critical data – such as production rates, performance time, quality specifications, and inventory information – is generated on the shop floor.

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With Plex, employees are able to input and retrieve real-time data so they can make more informed decisions. Accurate quality data has helped the company manage its resources efficiently by eliminating waste and reducing errors. For example, the company previously had two to three full-time staff working only on report generation. Now, any user can create reports within minutes, and this has allowed management to avoid unnecessary costs, redirect resources to other higher value tasks and proactively address production issues.

“Plex has simplified data gathering and data management at all levels of our enterprise, allowing savings in time and resources,” said Arvel Wooten, organizational development specialist, Hatch Stamping Company.

In fact, Plex’s ease of use is exemplified in the company’s Mexico plant where 90 percent of the shop-floor employees speak Spanish. Although Plex offers foreign language capabilities, the employees continue to use the system in English.

“The extremely user-friendly capabilities of Plex have allowed us to cross the cultural and language barriers,” explained Wooten.

Multi-Plant Feature Enables Performance Traceability

Earlier, the finances at Hatch’s United States and Mexico plants were tracked together. There was no way to track performance at individual plants. Unable to see the real-time manufacturing processes at individual locations, Hatch found it difficult to work efficiently with minimal waste. Plex’s multi-plant feature enables the company to monitor and manage accounts and inventories for each of its plants, allowing maximum transparency.

Barcode Labeling Feature Establishes Inventory Transparency

Although Hatch was able to track inventory, time and production with the earlier system, it still involved manual, time-consuming processes. Plex simplified the process and also made it paperless on the production floor.

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“Plex made our processes paperless.”

With Plex’s built-in barcode features, the process of tracking parts, containers and shipping details is more accurate and simplified. The barcoding solution supports hundreds of standard and specialized barcode formats and is fully integrated into the application. It is used for inventory tracking, shipping/receiving, tool tracking, gage tracking, labor time and attendance, and other areas. Part numbers, purchase order numbers, lot numbers, or any other information can be encoded into a barcode.

“The barcoding function has made tracking parts more accurate and easy. Now, we are able to give precise information to our suppliers. We used to have a 10,000-foot view of inventory. Now we view it from 10 feet. That is a huge change,” attests Wooten.

Customized Function Measures OEE

At Hatch, Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE) is the key performance indicator (KPI). OEE, in conjunction with lean manufacturing methods, is a measurement of success. The company breaks OEE into three separate, but measurable, components: downtime, performance-to-rate, and quality. These metrics focus on the effectiveness of the company’s manufacturing operations.

Plex created a customized function to measure OEE. This function provides powerful but simple-to-use functions to measure OEE and maximize uptime and productivity. Metrics such as parts produced per minute, employee time for a specific task, downtime in production and quality of the parts can be easily entered into the system for report generation. The data gathered is used for preventing, identifying and solving production issues quickly. Plex provides detailed tracking of everything the company receives, makes, and ships. This information has enabled management to achieve world-class manufacturing performance levels.

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Since equipment effectiveness impacts shop-floor employees more than any other group, Plex enables them to track OEE and plan and implement equipment and workflow improvements to improve efficiency.

“The Cloud model allows us to access information from anywhere, anytime.”

OEE reporting and analyses helps Hatch avoid costly breakdowns, expand its technical knowledge base, and respond quickly to maintenance problems. “Plex’s ability to provide detailed information quickly saves us time. With the Cloud model, it has allowed us to access information from anywhere, anytime. We are no longer chasing data from one source to another. It is now readily available to help us make informed and proactive decisions,” said Wooten.

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About Plex

Plex is the Manufacturing Cloud, delivering industry-leading ERP and manufacturing automation to more than 350 companies across industries including aerospace and defense, food and beverage and motor vehicles. Plex pioneered cloud solutions for the shop floor, connecting suppliers, machines, people, systems and customers with capabilities that are easy to configure, deliver continuous innovation, and reduce IT costs. With insight that starts on the production line, Plex helps companies see and understand every aspect of their business ecosystem, enabling them to lead in an ever-changing market.