

5 Steps to Winning Now in Manufacturing

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The manufacturing industry and the technology that drives it continue to evolve fast. Certainly, manufacturers need to keep an eye on what's coming down the road, but my experience as an ERP software provider tells me that the most successful manufacturers mostly think about what they need to do to win today.

Manufacturers who win focus on delivering quality products on time every time, providing a great customer experience and developing long-term relationships with their customers. In other words, they help their customers win as well and here are a few ways the best manufacturers do it.

1

Schedule Hot Jobs With Confidence.

Scheduling jobs is one of the most complex and demanding tasks in a manufacturing enterprise, especially if you use manual processes. From work orders to raw material availability, labor and workcenter capacity, inventory status, and much more, scheduling involves a staggering array of variables that can take hours or days to complete. ERP software dramatically reduces the time required to [schedule jobs](#) by processing all the variables in a matter of seconds. You enter the data and the software schedules the job for you in minutes.

However, when customers request very short lead times or need changes to a job in progress it's a different story. Do you accept the job and hope you can get it done in time? Or do you decline it and risk losing the customer to a competitor who can meet the due date?



That's where having an ERP system that supports real time scheduling decisions makes a difference. Advanced features like forward-backward and what-if scheduling allow you to see how hot jobs will affect other jobs already in the schedule. The scheduling software also tracks every step of the production process so you know when a job will be done. When you can accommodate a razor-thin lead time or squeeze a hot job into the schedule with confidence, it provides a significant edge over the competition.

Consider the example of [Berlin Gardens](#), which manufactures outdoor living furniture, gazebos, pavilions and other products. The company offers a wide variety of customizable options for its products yet offers a two-week lead time for furniture orders and three to four weeks for outdoor structure orders – lead times their competitors can't match.

Berlin Gardens can offer these lead times because their scheduling software automatically generates work orders to schedule the start of all new jobs. Using work orders to drive production creates a smooth workflow and allows the company to build only the amount of stock needed to ship. Jobs rarely get behind, and when they do planners can shuffle the work orders to move up production for certain jobs based on overloaded workcenters or other issues.

Winning now starts with meeting your promised due dates. Advanced Planning & Scheduling ERP application makes it happen.

2 Help Your Customers Be More Efficient.

Global Shop Solutions' mission has always been to simplify manufacturing for our customers. Recently, some of them have started simplifying business for their customers. [Load King](#), which designs and builds branded kiosks, restaurants, and physical stores, offers a compelling example.

Load King started out as an equipment consolidator and manufacturer in the late 1950s, and over the years has adapted to numerous market changes. The company continues to produce trailers and other heavy equipment, but their most recent adaptation is revolutionizing an entire industry – the store opening process.

Opening a retail store is a complex and costly process that often gets bogged down with too many cooks in the kitchen. From managing general contractors, designers and architects to getting bids for store fixtures and other interior features to dealing with different equipment suppliers it's no surprise that stores often miss their planned opening dates. Handling separate invoicing and billing from dozens of vendors does not lend efficiency to the process.

Load King provides all these products and services under one roof, making the entire process quicker and easier while significantly reducing costs. They not only guarantee on-time delivery, they exceed most client opening dates by 30 percent.

Imagine you're in charge of opening a store for a large brand. With Load King you work with one vendor instead of dozens. Construction will be performed by contractors that know your business. You know the job will get done on time, if not sooner. All work is guaranteed. And you'll handle one invoice instead of hundreds. This gargantuan undertaking couldn't happen without [ERP software](#) capable of managing what are essentially dozens of different businesses in one system.

ERP often gets manufacturers to rethink how they operate their businesses. To win now, don't just simplify your own business. Use ERP to do it for your customers as well.

3 Tailor Your ERP Software to Your Needs.

Modern ERP systems provide amazing capabilities out of the box, but their features don't always align with the way you need to do business.

[Tailored ERP](#) that lets you tailor the software to your specific needs provides a powerful tool for winning today. Here are some examples from Global Shop Solutions customers.

[Archer Advanced Rubber Components](#) uses a tailored program to manage incoming overseas part shipments from China. The program tracks whether a part has been ordered, if it's in transit, and the expected arrival date. It automatically merges the data into one screen for quick comparison of demand for the parts with current supply on hand and what is arriving via transit.

[Connecticut Spring & Stamping](#) has to attach multiple certifications when shipping their products. This formerly required manually tracking raw material certifications and outside services used on a job. Now, a tailored program automatically generates all the certs and documentation required by the customer.

Panoramic, Inc. manufactures thermoformed packaging products using complex machines that can have up to 350 different settings. These settings have to be adjusted every time a new part is run. Using a custom script, Panoramic simplifies the adjustment process by tracking machine settings by work order, reviewing previous jobs to determine the settings for a particular part, and using them as a baseline for new parts.

These custom programs all save time and ensure data accuracy while you do things the way you need to do them. With the right ERP software, the ability to customize screens, programs and processes is limited only by your imagination.



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4 Outflank Your Competition.

One of the best ways to outflank competitors is speed – doing everything you do faster and better than anyone else. [Geremarie Corporation](#), a design, engineering and manufacturing company, has achieved this goal by automating and integrating their entire factory to maximize efficiency.

The company's integrated end-to-end ERP system enable the production of parts 24/7 with unparalleled speed and precision. When customers order a part from anywhere in the world it automatically schedules it onto a machine in seconds. Geremarie prides itself on the ability to make any aluminum component, including parts that don't yet exist, by thinking in terms of possibility rather than what exists now.

Operating a facility of this nature requires ongoing investment in the latest machine technology and tools to deliver high-capacity manufacturing with speed and precision. For Geremarie, the results outweigh the investment costs through increased profitability and a worldwide reputation for the highest quality parts delivered on time. Based on their reputation, a large USA-based surgical medical equipment provider recently selected Geremarie as an approved supplier.

Geremarie reached this point by re-engineering expensive aluminum components used in the marine industry to reduce their cost. As time went by, they repeated the process with hundreds of aluminum parts, and today process millions of orders in a variety of industries. They continue to revise processes and invest in new equipment, people, training, and systems, making it possible to deliver a quality part on time every time and outflank their competitors who can't.



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5 Combine eCommerce With Manufacturing.

Today's manufacturing customers want simplicity and convenience when doing business with you. For many, this includes the ability to order parts and products directly from your website.

With an [eCommerce](#) website, customers can order 24/7 while viewing your entire range of products and customization options. Your ERP system automatically launches the sales and work order processes and sends a digital invoice to the customer. Online payments via credit card and other options simplify the customer's payment process while improving your company's cash flow. All of which delivers a fast, convenient experience for your customers.

Meanwhile, you gain access to new markets and reach a wider range of customers. The simpler front-end operations ensure faster time to market. Multiple payment options improve cash flow, and your customer service and sales teams can spend more time on higher-value tasks.

[The Cleveland Punch & Die Company](#), which manufactures punches, dies, shear blades, and special application tooling, can testify to the benefits of eCommerce. For years, their lack of an online store and related advertising made it difficult for customers to keep up with the company's latest offerings. It also made it hard for prospects to discover the company's products and services. A complete website makeover that included eCommerce capabilities brought Cleveland Punch & Die into the modern age by making purchasing quicker and easier for customers and prospects.

However, there's more to successful eCommerce than having an online store. The store needs advertising to attract prospects and take business away from competitors. Cleveland Punch & Die implemented an online marketing program with two key elements: promoting their products on Google and using online ads to advertise against their competitors' brand names. The campaign resulted in new visitors to their website from competitor ads and thousands of leads and sales.

ECommerce requires three essential elements. A Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP) software program so customers' web portals can communicate with your ERP system. An experienced agency to build your eCommerce portal. An ERP system that integrates with your eCommerce platform. Once the eCommerce website is up and running, launch your advertising campaigns.

Before investing in building an eCommerce website, make sure your ERP system can integrate with it. If not, acquire one that can.

WIN TODAY WITH ERP SOFTWARE

With the right ERP software for your business, you really can get quality products out the door on time every time while delivering a consistently great customer experience.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dusty Alexander has been instrumental in Global Shop Solutions' growth and development as an innovative leader in the ERP software industry. Under his direction, the company has increased sales every year, and has grown into one of the largest privately held discrete manufacturing ERP software solutions companies.

Alexander is actively involved in our customers' increased benefits derived from the software. Through his dedication, Global Shop Solutions has earned a reputation for outstanding customer service, superior training and highly successful product implementations.

Call us at +1.800.364.5958 or [set up an online demo](#) to learn how ERP can help you win by helping your customers win.

