

BREAK OUT OF THE PAPER PRISON

Going Paperless is the Key to Manufacturing Efficiency

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What's truly holding your discrete manufacturing shop back from reaching its full potential? It's often not the commonly cited culprits like labor shortages, razor-thin margins or fierce competition. More often than not, the unseen, insidious enemy is **paper**.

Imagine your shop floor: stacks of traveler packets, critical work orders printed and distributed, production schedules taped to machines and invaluable knowledge scrawled on sticky notes. This isn't just an outdated system; it's a haphazardly crafted environment designed for chaos, delays and critical errors. Your shop, whether you realize it or not, is paying a steep price for this paper-based inefficiency.

The economic impact is staggering. According to AMR Research, manufacturers can lose up to a staggering **20% of their productive capacity** due to inefficient processes – a significant portion of which are directly attributed to outdated, paper-based workflows. This isn't just about the cost of toner and paper; it's about lost time, wasted materials, missed deadlines and a compromised bottom line.

The good news, however, is that escaping this “paper prison” is far simpler and more accessible than you might imagine. Thousands of discrete manufacturers have already successfully broken free, transforming their operations and reclaiming control. This whitepaper reveals how.



The Paper Trap = Dangerous

Consider the everyday frustrations that plague a paper-dependent manufacturing environment. Have you ever experienced the sheer inefficiency of having to:

- **Re-run an entire job** because a team member inadvertently used an outdated drawing or specification?
- **Delay a critical shipment** because no one on the floor knew the exact location or status of specific parts or work-in-progress (WIP)?
- **Absorb an expensive rush fee** or face penalties because a crucial paper traveler went missing, bringing production to a grinding halt?

If these scenarios resonate, you are far from alone. These are not isolated incidents but systemic issues bred by paper-based processes. Such systems are inherently prone to:

- **Crippling Delays:** Information becomes siloed, lost or misinterpreted. Physical documents can be misplaced, misfiled or simply inaccessible when needed. Bottlenecks and extended lead times become the norm.
- **Extravagant Waste:** Outdated documentation leads to incorrect builds, scrap and rework. Lack of real-time visibility fosters overproduction or underproduction. Excessive inventory and missed opportunities are standard operating procedure.
- **Persistent Errors:** Manual data entry across multiple paper forms and spreadsheets is an open invitation for human oversight, typos and inconsistencies. This costs manufacturers millions each year.
- **Profound Frustration:** Personnel are constantly in the dark, unable to quickly determine the real-time status of jobs, materials or equipment. As Chad Wengerd, Information Technology Manager from Walnut Creek Planning Ltd. puts it, "We used to have difficulty keeping track of where inventory was stored. Our forklift drivers would go to pull a particular part only to find that it had already been used or moved to another location. This meant they had to spend time tracking it down in the warehouse or finding a material substitution." This lack of transparency erodes morale and productivity.

The "paper trap" is a significant barrier to growth, profitability and operational excellence.

The Escape Plan = Go Paperless

The path to liberation from the inefficiencies of paper lies in adopting a robust, integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. With ERP, manufacturers can eliminate the inefficiencies of paper – permanently. This transformative shift means embracing a digital ecosystem that empowers your entire operation:

- **Digital Travelers with Real-Time Updates:** Say goodbye to physical traveler packets. ERP software replaces them with digital travelers accessible instantly from a workstation or tablet on the shop floor. Every operation, every material movement and every quality check is updated in real-time, ensuring everyone always has the most current information.
- **Live Dashboards on Every Workcenter:** Provide your operators and supervisors with immediate, visual insights. Tailored, live dashboards on individual workcenters display job queues, priority lists, machine status and performance metrics. This eliminates the need for printed schedules and manual tracking and fosters proactive decision-making with optimal resource utilization.
- **Barcode Scanning to Track Inventory and WIP Instantly:** Through barcode scanning, materials can be received, issued, moved and consumed with incredible speed and accuracy. This eliminates manual count errors, reduces inventory discrepancies and provides precise, real-time visibility into every component on your floor.
- **Shop Floor Data Collection (SFDC) that Instantaneously Updates:** Empower your employees to record critical production data directly at the source. SFDC stations allow operators to clock in/out of jobs, report quantities, record scrap and note deviations digitally. This data is instantly captured and integrated into the ERP system, providing unparalleled accuracy for costing, scheduling and performance analysis.

As Craig Kowatch, General Manager at Goetsch's Welding & Machine, shared:

“Chasing down this information used to require a lot of legwork. Now we can instantly see what needs to be done instead of scrolling through mountains of paper lists detailing all the different subcomponents. We can get any information we want from Global Shop Solutions.”

This level of transparency is the cornerstone of operational efficiency.



Real Results = Speed, Accuracy and Confidence

The transition to a paperless environment with ERP is more than theory. It delivers concrete, measurable results that directly impact your shop's performance and profitability. What would it truly mean for your shop if you could achieve:

- **Significantly faster job throughput?** Imagine moving jobs through your production cycle 30% faster, reducing bottlenecks and increasing overall capacity without additional capital investment.
- **Unprecedented inventory accuracy?** What if your inventory accuracy consistently remained above 98%, virtually eliminating stockouts, overstocking and the need for time-consuming physical counts?
- **Dramatically reduced lead times and eliminated costly overtime?** Picture a scenario where you consistently meet and exceed customer expectations, allowing you to cut down on rush orders and the associated overtime expenses.

These aren't hypothetical aspirations; they are the tangible realities experienced by manufacturers who have adopted Global Shop Solutions ERP:

- IVD Research Inc. experienced a **25% reduction in raw materials inventory and purchasing costs** by increasing their shop floor visibility, allowing them to order in advance.
- Vonberg Valve, Inc. achieved a **50% reduction in time and paperwork** by moving their production and shipping processes off of paper and into one integrated software.
- Tilo Industries saw their on-time delivery rate skyrocket from **75% to an outstanding 98%** after prioritizing data accuracy and visibility by going paperless.

As Annette McLaughlin, Production Control and IT Manager at CAP & Associates, Inc., states:

"Global Shop Solutions gives us the visibility we need to manage the entire production process more efficiently and effectively."

This control and visibility translates directly into enhanced productivity, reduced costs and the confidence to take on new opportunities.



The Right Partner = Global Shop Solutions

While the benefits of going paperless with an ERP system are clear, the choice of the right partner is paramount. Unlike generic ERP systems that attempt to be a “one-size-fits-all” solution, Global Shop Solutions is meticulously built specifically for discrete manufacturers. We understand the unique complexities of your world – from intricate bills of material (BOMs) and dynamic routing to precise job costing and fluctuating production schedules. Our tools are optimized to simplify these complexities:

- **One System. One Truth.** Eliminate the fragmented, error-prone landscape of disparate spreadsheets, outdated whiteboards and unreliable tribal knowledge. Global Shop Solutions provides a single, unified system where all critical business data resides, ensuring consistency, accuracy and real-time access for every department.
- **Family-Owned, U.S. Based.** In an industry increasingly dominated by private equity firms and impersonal corporate structures, Global Shop Solutions stands apart. As a family-owned, U.S.-based company, we operate with a long-term vision, prioritizing customer relationships and unwavering support. There are no gimmicks, just a dedicated partner who answers the phone and is committed to your success for the long haul.

David Sosnow, President at Becker Electronics, Inc., says:

“With ERP, you’re not just buying software; you’re buying a relationship, and we believe we got the right partner with Global Shop Solutions.”

It’s a partnership focused on optimizing your entire manufacturing ecosystem.

It's Time to Break Free

The true cost of paper in your manufacturing operation extends far beyond simple consumables or wasted minutes. It manifests as lost trust with customers due to delayed deliveries, the stress of constantly fighting fires and the missed opportunities that come with inefficient processes.

You don't need another patchwork of spreadsheets or a collection of isolated software tools. You need a comprehensive, integrated system that empowers you to control your entire operation.

ERP is your way out of the paper prison. It's time to break free from outdated methods, embrace digital transformation and take back complete control of your production, your profitability and your future.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adam Grabowski is the Director of Marketing at Global Shop Solutions. He is responsible for translating the company's business objectives into successful brand, marketing and communication strategies to drive awareness, revenue and loyalty.