

GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS CASE STUDY

EPTAM Precision Plastics

EPTAM Precision Plastics, is located in Northfield, New Hampshire and was founded in 1981. Within the walls of its sprawling, modern, 62,000-square-foot facility, you'll discover a company hard at work in their place at the top of the machining & fabrication business.



Working a 5-axis CNC cell operation, this EPTAM operator is capable of quickly connecting material inventory with WIP through their real-time ERP software.



In lathe cell area, an operator prepares her machine for live-tooling for precision machining according to work orders routed through EPTAM's Shop Floor Data Collection system.

The EPTAM Plastics Revolution

Working just as hard alongside EPTAM has been their enterprise resource planning (ERP) software provider, [Global Shop Solutions](#). Through both product innovation and a dedication to quality customer service, Global Shop Solutions provides the shop controls necessary to help EPTAM fully realize their goals as a premier manufacturer working in a variety of industries. It's a relationship built around the certainty that manufacturing today requires more than just machinery and manpower. To succeed today, [job shops](#), [make-to-order](#), [make-to-stock](#), and [mixed mode](#) manufacturers need reliable and instantaneous information in order to make the best possible business decisions. For EPTAM, this means consistent improvement in capacity planning, costing, labor efficiency, and quality.

According to EPTAM President Jeff Hollinger, the emphasis Global Shop Solutions places upon helping the small to mid-range manufacturer was what first attracted their attention.

"It was 1997 and we were looking at several ERP systems out there," remembers Hollinger. "After what was a pretty thorough investigation and decision process, we chose Global Shop Solutions because they are really designed around the idea of a job shop, which is exactly what we are."

EPTAM Gains Greater Cost Efficiency

EPTAM has seen the company expand from three employees to 90+ and move into their state-of-the-art machining facility. Servicing a variety of industries including aerospace, medical, power generation, defense, and printing machinery, EPTAM depends on Global Shop Solutions ERP software to deliver a superior [shop management system](#) that interfaces with the way they do business. The result has been superior shop-wide cost management. Kathy Morin, EPTAM's Controller, sees the biggest return on their investment in Global Shop Solutions ERP software in [cost accounting](#).

“Being a manufacturer, there’s always a lot of pressure on us to contain costs,” states Morin. “Global Shop Solutions allows us to do more with the same number of people. We do things smarter with Global Shop Solutions, and the software really provides us with a better way of managing our business. This is why we find it so important to utilize Global Shop Solutions in every part of what we do. In fact, because we’re more efficient, we’ve increased our sales considerably over the years without adding any more people.”

“That’s right,” agrees Hollinger, “Our business has grown 50% in the past three years, but our indirect costs are exactly the same. It’s really amazing what Global Shop Solutions has done for us in managing our costs. On the direct side, by allowing us to do a better job managing the jobs that need to be run, Global Shop Solutions is making the running of each job that much more efficient. For example, we’re better able to look at **our inventory** and tie it into Automatic Stop-Order Generation.”

In short, Global Shop Solutions ERP software is a major force that informs decisions of capacity planning, run priority, and inventory management. To the extent that Global Shop Solutions ERP software is able to bring a wealth of information to bear in the decision-making process, the software becomes the central point for data collection and analysis.

“It’s very simple where Global Shop Solutions helps us in overall direct costs,” says Hollinger. “It’s because we find ourselves pretty much running the right part at the right time. And, that helps with the overall cash-flow, inventory turns, and all of the other things that make our shop as highly cost efficient as it is.”

Of course, costs are not only a result of shop floor functions, but they are also part of daily front office operations. The manual processing, cross referencing, and distribution of sales order, payroll, and routing data are laborious tasks involving several sets of eyes and hands – often in what eventually proves to be redundant efforts. With EPTAM, this has all changed with the simplifying efficiencies found in their ERP software.

John Nesteruk, EPTAM’s Plant Manager, points out that, “some of our front office changes made by having Global Shop Solutions are really helping us to go **paperless** throughout the plant. We’ve also reduced our office staff by better utilizing the software, especially with Quick Quotes and the **CRM** application. All of this contributes to overall cost reductions.”



EPTAM’s capabilities include three high-speed CNC routers designed to efficiently produce precision components from large sheet stock.

ERP Software Training Adds Value

Management personnel at EPTAM are great believers in the benefits of the annual **ERP User Conference**. It’s a place where they’ve discovered the riches of digging deeper into the **multitude of applications** found in the software. In fact, EPTAM has undergone major changes in their ERP system as a direct result of participation in conferences. The result for EPTAM is a new way of looking at the way they do business in the 21st century.

“What struck us at our first conference was how much Global Shop Solutions has to offer in terms of ERP,” states Hollinger. “We came back bright-eyed and energized about what’s in the software from that conference. Now, we always leave the conferences excited about the new things that are coming up in the system, and all the upgrades we’re eagerly looking forward to.”

EPTAM understands the importance of ERP, and it shows in all that they do to optimize their operations through continuous improvement. This philosophy is evidenced by the completion of their recent comprehensive software upgrade project.

The company-wide effort involved bringing up a number of under-utilized sections of the system, as well as putting in 19 **Shop Floor Data Collection** stations out on the shop floor to replace their old barcoding system. This meant not only implementing the new hardware and software upgrades, but inspiring a sense of accomplishment through employee investment in the new system changes. For the people of EPTAM, the user-friendly nature of their Global Shop Solutions ERP software facilitated an increased appreciation for what the software could do for their productivity as part and parcel of a larger company mission.

“I know the people on the shop floor love the Shop Floor Data Collection stations,” says Morin. “They can see more information and feel better about the system than what they were dealing with before, when we were constantly sending paperwork to the machines and the centers. Our operators now have the ability to see what’s coming in and the status of things being worked on.”

“In this regard, Global Shop Solutions and our new stations have made our people part of the upgrade through becoming invested themselves in the success of the effort,” she continues. “Everyone on the shop floor – everyone – feels more integrated into the system, and integrated into EPTAM.”

Advanced Planning & Scheduling Application Delivers On Time

A more integrated workforce in alliance with improved capacity planning means that work gets done right on time. EPTAM realizes this every day through their use of Global Shop Solutions ERP software.

Whether it’s milling, turning, routing, sawing, or any other capability of EPTAM, work orders move through the plant with efficiency and accountability. Part of the reason is the robust nature of the **APS** application.

“Global Shop Solutions has really helped us in terms of on-time delivery, and where it’s made its most impact is in the APS application,” states Hollinger. “By using the whole APS application, it’s giving us a much better look at what dates we should be committing to and making sure we start the right work at the right time. The software also aids in moving work from one cell to another.”

“We can build the routers in time, where it was hard for us to imagine this before getting Global Shop Solutions,” adds Nesteruk. “We use it for outside services, sort inspection for first-time articles, waste elimination, and all the other things that go with making life easier by having great information at your fingertips. Something we’re looking forward to next is utilizing the **Document Control™** application to move engineering information along with our routers – and all through our new Shop Floor Data Collection stations.”

Best practices is not just a business management concept for the people of EPTAM, but a desire to continuously improve their operation for the benefit of the bottom-line.

Liberty and Union to Create a Greater Sum

Success is an ever-harder thing to achieve in the competitive global economy of modern manufacturing. It takes both an independent mindset when it comes to product quality and customer service, while at the same time relying upon a great ERP solution to simplify operations and improve efficiency.

Borrowing from Daniel Webster, it takes the “liberty and union” of individual businesses in partnership to create a greater sum. Improved on-time delivery, cost accounting, capacity planning, production scheduling, inventory management, quality, labor efficiency, accounting – they’re all parts of the ERP software that contribute to EPTAM’s success.

“Our connection with Global Shop Solutions is strong because we know they’re dedicated to research and development,” Hollinger concludes. “It’s really a lot more than most other software companies and the Global Shop Solutions product is superior for this reason. What this means for us and our relationship with Global Shop Solutions is that we can always expect that they’re looking out for what their customers are looking for, what they’re needing now and in the future.”