

GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS CASE STUDY

Industrial Filter Manufacturing Ltd

Liquid filter bags are essential for filtering out contaminants in industrial water systems and chemical processing equipment. *Industrial Filter Manufacturing Ltd (IFM)*, located in Penetanguishene, Ontario, Canada, has been making standard and custom filter bags for over 40 years. They're now making them more efficiently thanks to their implementation of Global Shop Solutions ERP software.



IFM produces high quality filtration products for a number of industries, including automotive, food & beverage, petrochemicals and oil & gas.



IFM's filter bags are made from high-quality polyester and polypropylene.

For JoLayne Advent, VP of Operations for IFM, it's almost like working in a new company.

"Before using Global Shop Solutions we tracked everything manually, which meant we didn't have access to real-time data," she says. "Determining the status of a job required a time-consuming visit to the shop floor. Our sales reps couldn't respond to customer inquiries quickly or with confidence. And it could even take up to a half an hour to find an infrequently used part in our warehouse."

Getting Production Under Control

Advent had the task of selecting the right ERP system for IFM and overseeing the implementation. They chose Global Shop Solutions for several reasons. The software offered the most value for IFM's needs. It offered a **cloud-based solution**, a top priority for Advent. Most importantly, it "spoke the language" of manufacturing.

"Global Shop Solutions is designed by manufacturers for manufacturers," says Advent. "They understand the complexity of manufacturing and how to get things done most efficiently on a shop floor. It is evident that Global Shop Solutions built that knowledge and experience into their ERP software."

IFM's first goal with Global Shop Solutions involved simplifying BOM and router creation. In the past, updating incorrect routers could take days or even weeks because it was all done by hand. As a result, orders were sometimes made incorrectly before the update occurred. Now the BOMs and routers can be corrected instantly thus creating a system for storing the data in the system rather than in people's heads.

"Some of our filtration bags have the same style but are built with different materials. Global Shop Solutions' **Document Control™** application allows us to link standard spec pages to multiple routers instead of having specific spec sheets for every type of material used," says Advent. "Before, when a cut pattern or something else changed, we had to manually correct multiple spec sheets. Now, changes automatically update all the routers linked to that one spec sheet, saving substantial time. Quicker changes mean increased time spent on more value-added activities and prevents the need to rework jobs due to incorrect routers."

Next, IFM tackled **inventory management**. They entered every type and amount of inventory into the ERP software, switched to a barcode tracking system, and began using the software's lot-bin capabilities. The benefits IFM has experienced as a result of using Global Shop Solutions' for inventory have been immediate and substantial.

"With lot-bin tracking, we can locate inventory very quickly," says Advent. "We now do cycle counts instead of a year-end physical inventory, which eliminates a time-consuming task while keeping inventory up to date. The ability to find a part no matter where it is with just a few clicks of the mouse is fabulous!"

It's What You Do With the Data that Counts

Initially, some IFM personnel found access to so much data a bit overwhelming, which is normal. That's when IFM began exploring one of Global Shop Solutions' most popular features – the robust array of **Dashboards**. These customizable tools summarize data in various areas of the business into a single screen, providing "at-a-glance" information to track past and present performance while informing decisions for the future. The goal of these dashboards is to be able to do the majority of your job from a single screen, all day, every day.

"My favorite Dashboard is Labor Performance," says Advent. "It contains information critical for business decisions, and the format makes it easy to find what you want. I use it to track how many hours we are spending on jobs, daily production numbers for specific workcenters, how often we make certain part numbers – just about anything I need to know related to labor costs and performance."

"The best part about the Dashboards is they allow us to export and then manipulate the data and print custom reports so we can see the data the way we want to see it," adds Advent.

With so many hats to wear on the job – including **accounting**, production, and warehousing – Advent saves her highest praise for the ever-popular Supply & Demand screen.

"Many of our managers are using the Supply & Demand screen because they can access numerous other Dashboards from that one screen," says Advent. "I live and breathe in Supply & Demand because it lets me do so much from one location. I might start with sales analysis and then see something that sets me off on another tangent. From one screen I can click into Work Order History, then go to Purchase Order History, then Item History, and even drill down to the BOM or router for a single item."

"Supply & Demand saves time because you can expand your data mining search in multiple directions without having to jump from one application to another," she continues. "Our sales team say the same thing about the **CRM application**. They rely on it for immediate access to a broad scope of information. It also eliminates trips to the shop floor to answer customer inquiries because the data is all there in the system."

Diving Deeper Into the Software

Over the last two years, Global Shop Solutions ERP software has transformed many vital processes for IFM. **Job costing** and **profitability** can be tracked with greater precision. Access to production data informs important decisions about product lines – such as how to cut costs, gain efficiencies, and which products are generating higher profit margins.

One of the biggest improvements has come from using the **Advanced Planning & Scheduling (APS)** application to schedule jobs more efficiently.

"The ability to see our true workload, both current and future, has impacted so many areas of the business," says Advent. "For example, seeing that a specific production area is at 100% capacity for the next two months prevents us from over-promising on new jobs. It allows us to explore where we might expand capacity in other areas or divert resources to a burdened department. It also lets sales reps know they need to focus on sales opportunities with available capacity."



From their 33,000-square-foot facility, a machine cuts materials for their liquid filtration bags.

Despite the prodigious results, Advent feels IFM is just beginning to discover all that the software can do. With inventory, scheduling and production under control, people are learning to use the **Quality Control application** and will soon branch out in other areas, while continuing to develop a deeper understand of the capabilities of the current models they use.

“I did not believe ERP software could make such a difference and so fast,” concludes Advent. “When we encounter a challenge, my first thought is, ‘How can Global Shop Solutions help us get to the end result faster?’ Whether it’s simplifying a process or finding new ways to organize and use the data, the answer is usually there in the system.”



An IFM employee sewing together the material for their filter bags.