

GLOBAL SHOP SOLUTIONS CASE STUDY

Wright Metal Products Crates

Wright Metal Products Crates (WMP Crates) specializes in the manufacture of lawn and garden crating, material handling carts, and custom crate design. A leader in the steel packaging solutions industry, the company is a trusted supplier for many of the biggest names in the lawn and garden and power sports industries. Headquartered in Lavonia, Georgia, WMP Crates operates a second production facility in Omaha, Nebraska.



One of WMP Crates' tube lasers.



WMP Crates laser machine making critical components.

Like many customers, WMP Crates acquired Global Shop Solutions ERP software to replace an outdated mishmash of spreadsheets and Access databases. With no integration between their business management tools, the company struggled to schedule jobs effectively, track costs, and accurately determine the profitability of each job. On a recommendation from the company's IT Manager, WMP Crates purchased Global Shop Solutions ERP software and immediately began using it.

Evolving Use of ERP Software

Since acquiring Global Shop Solutions ERP software, WMP Crates has evolved from a general manufacturing company to one that specializes in lawn and garden and power sporting crate products. Not surprisingly, the company's use of Global Shop Solutions ERP software has changed along with it.

Initially, WMP Crates used the ERP software to manage most of their **shop floor activities**. In particular, they found it helpful in creating multi-level bill of materials (BOMs) to track parts as they moved through the company's complex and often lengthy production processes. Now, with a limited number of product lines, they use the ERP software less for planning, scheduling and forecasting and more for **order entry**, **accounting**, and **inventory management**.

"Global Shop Solutions has made a huge difference for us in inventory management," explains Chad Cole, Head of Logistics for the Nebraska facility. "It's given us the ability to do cycle counts, which we couldn't do before. We use it to set up move tickets, which allow us to move products through shop faster and more accurately. And we use it to create bin locations so that we can track parts in inventory, locate them efficiently, and get them ready for shipments."

"Most important, Global Shop Solutions gives us the visibility of what we have on hand and what we need to order, which has helped to reduce our inventory carrying costs," he says. "And that's the real value of Global Shop Solutions – as long as people do the right thing at the right time, it's a very good system for doing what you need to do faster and more efficiently."

For David Stevenson, Comptroller for WMP Crates, Global Shop Solutions ERP software has literally transformed the financial side of the business. He uses all the financial modules, including general ledger, receivables and payables, to keep the company's finances in order. And he especially appreciates the way the ERP software seamlessly integrates all the data from every area in the business.

"When I came aboard, I inherited a mess," recalls Stevenson. "We had an old accounting software program that didn't do anything well. As a result, we didn't know who owed us what. We didn't know who we owed. And nothing balanced. Global Shop Solutions helped us pull everything together and get the proper checks and balances in place. It also provides the financial reporting we need to make sure everything is working right. It's a world of difference with Global Shop Solutions!"

Customization the Key to Success

Over the years, WMP Crates has made extensive use of the powerful [Global Application Builder \(GAB\)](#), which enables users to create custom programs at minimal cost.

One of the big GAB "wins" for WMP Crates is their returnable crate program, which tracks their crates by file feeds. This GAB program converts WMP Crates' file of serial numbers into an XML file and puts it onto a secure .ftp site, enabling the company to track and manage their assets as they move throughout the U.S. and Canada.

"When we ship our crates to a customer, we also send an XML data file with the serial numbers," explains Cole. "This allows our tracking system to electronically 'move' the crate from our physical location to the customer's physical location. We know through the file feed that the serial number has moved from point A to point B, making it easy to track the whereabouts of our crates at all times. "

"Meanwhile, the custom GAB program we use to import and create firm and planned orders is currently saving us 40 to 50 hours of labor per week, which basically eliminates the full-time labor costs of one person," he adds. "The cost for this customization was minimal compared to the order entry accuracy and labor savings we are seeing in the scheduling process."

Other GAB programs include a recent customization that allows Cole to upload a spreadsheet through [EDI](#) and run a large number of variables against it. This enables him to isolate exceptions and identify what new orders need to be created in Global Shop Solutions ERP software. Once they accept the new orders, the script systematically creates them. If any exceptions occur, the script provides the ability to review or process them. It also allows Cole to roll the data into forecasting (through EDI) and auto generate all the forecast orders. That way, Cole can project the workload out for a full year.

"This is critical for us because some of our items have lead times of up to 12 weeks to get materials," adds Cole. "As the rolling forecast changes, we can lock in better steel pricing and control being prepared for the product when the materials come in."

Custom Reports for Perfect Data Visibility

In addition to GAB, WMP Crates has used the software's ability to [integrate with Crystal reports](#) to create hundreds of custom reports. These tailor the information in Global Shop Solutions ERP software to the way people prefer to see it.

For example, one custom report pulls the order tables into a cross-tab report that allows plant managers to see what is coming up due – by day, customer or part – and when it needs to be delivered. Cole has also created a custom cycle counts sheet, customized labels, and a custom PO report that details what materials need to be ordered for confirmed orders and for forecast orders, projected out by each customer.



A scooptram frame weldment (rear power frame) ready to mount.

In addition to customization, Cole gives the ERP software high marks for its combination of robust capabilities and ease of use.

“Overall, Global Shop Solutions has been easy to use and easy to train people on,” he says.

Stevenson concurs on the importance of Global Shop Solutions ERP software’s flexibility.

“Out of the box, Global Shop Solutions gives us a very good picture of our costs and profitability,” he says. “It keeps us organized and enables us to do our jobs more efficiently. But I really like the flexibility of being able to run reports in various orders and formats to suit our needs. If we find that a standard report isn’t sufficient, we can easily put it into a Crystal report, download it into Excel, and get what we need.”

“We’ve found that the more you use Global Shop Solutions, the more things you can learn to do with it,” adds Cole. “In terms of customizing the software, it seems like the possibilities are endless. Sure, there are time and costs involved in tweaking the software to fit your business. But when you look at what the software can accomplish, I haven’t found anything yet that it can’t do.”



A finished WMP Crates crating product after being powder coated.



Overhead view of one of WMP Crates site areas where anything from cutting to welding to forming takes place.