



Sought-After Leader in Medical Device Manufacturing Switches from Spreadsheets and Whiteboards to PT APS

The Anspach Effort, Inc. (Anspach), a market leader in high-speed instrumentation for neurosurgery, neurotology, otology, and orthopedics, possessed an uncharacteristic low-tech approach to production scheduling: It relied on paper, spreadsheets, and a whiteboard to schedule and track its production cycle.

Even so, Anspach never failed to deliver best-in-class product quality, technology and service throughout its 30-year history of producing ultrafine medical instruments critical to life-saving surgery.



Bruce Hays, Anspach's director of material systems and information technology, describes the challenge: "Each product involves hundreds of individual processes. Multiply that by 11,000 products and 2,000 concurrent production orders. You can imagine the complexity," says Hays. "Production is further complicated by the critical demand nature of manufacturing medical equipment—we frequently need to reschedule a process to provide a vital piece of equipment sooner than originally scheduled."

Hays resolved to upgrade production scheduling and went in search for best-of-breed. Anspach evaluated several APS solutions before selecting PlanetTogether. "We immediately appreciated the user-friendly interface," Hays says. "PlanetTogether promised fast integration with direct interface to our manufacturing software. Competitors cited long-term implementation schedules. Worse yet, they expected substantial changes to the way we operate."

Smooth Integration

At the same time PlanetTogether was fulfilling its rapid implementation promise (over the Internet), Anspach changed its ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system to MySAP. "Our users did not even notice the difference," says Hays. "We flipped the switch and it worked. It was a seamless transition. The team at PlanetTogether is exceptional."

What-ifs

One of the prime motivator's for Anspach's decision is Planet's what-if analysis capability. When an individual order or an entire operation must be placed on hold, the Planet system allows Anspach to immediately see the impact of that change.

"If we have a delay due to a technical problem or an outside process, we can see the effect that delay has on our entire schedule," says Hays. "This is vital information to keep our production on track."

This 360-degree vision applies to rescheduling a particular job, without interrupting the scheduling system. "We work with the what-if scenarios until we find the one that works best for us and then take the new schedule live," Hays explains.

Cut Costs

With the strengths of MySAP and PlanetTogether combined, Anspach could now migrate to a build-to-order lean manufacturing model. "Before, we built to satisfy our sales forecasts," Hays explains. "Inevitably, some of those items would sit in inventory and we'd run out of stock on another and have to rush to produce it. It was a costly and inefficient way to operate," says Hays.

In less than 60-days, Anspach eliminated 250 production orders that would have been built to satisfy forecasts. "The shift to PlanetTogether is **saving us about 15 percent in inventory overhead** and about **20 percent in overtime labor expenses**. We're not building equipment to stock any longer—we're building to ship," Hays says.

What's more, Planet's powerful order and resource optimization engine ensures production efficiency across all lines. Constraint factors such as labor, equipment, tools, and materials are now scheduled accurately which boosts reliability and ease of use for shop floor staff. Best of all, there are no surprises.

"We now have a consistent tool for our planning and scheduling that is used by most of the departments, from supervisors, production planners, purchasing, IT staff, and management," concludes Hays. "More important, we're delivering what we said we would, when we said we would. PlanetTogether is an amazingly powerful tool."

Postscript

Anspach underwent a critical transformation in 2011. Multi-billion dollar market leader Synthes purchased Anspach. Through its five product groups (Trauma, Spine, Cranio-Maxillofacial, Biomaterials and Power Tools), Synthes develops, produces and markets instruments, implants and biomaterials for the surgical fixation, correction and regeneration of the human skeleton and its soft tissues. The Synthes brand name is known on every continent and in virtually every operating room around the world.

The good news continues. In spring of 2011, Synthes merged with icon Johnson & Johnson to create the 'world's most innovative and comprehensive orthopaedics business', a transaction valued at \$21.3 billion dollars.

About PlanetTogether

PlanetTogether is known for stellar performance in production scheduling for multi-plant manufacturers. Founded in 2004 by Cornell University engineers, this San Diego-based software developer thrives on the challenge of algorithms to drive manufacturing efficiency. Planet's showcase product is the **Galaxy APS production scheduling platform**, whose muscular functionality cuts inventory and labor costs in half, boosts productivity by double digits, and connects multi-plant operations with precision. Fully customizable, *Galaxy* integrates to virtually all ERP systems, typically in four months, and pays for itself in six.