



## How One Nutritional Manufacturer Schedules 300 Products with Ease and Efficiency

Few of us consume the 5 to 9 servings of fruits and vegetables recommended daily by health advocates. Of course, we can narrow the gap with nutritional supplements, which is why consumption has grown by 40 percent since the early 1990s, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. But not any supplement will do. Many people shun imports in favor of higher quality home-grown brands.

Since 1929, **Standard Process** of Palmyra, Wisconsin, has stood for quality from “seed to supplement,” investing in organic farming and state-of-the-art manufacturing processes to create more than 300 popular dietary supplements, produced under Food and Drug Administration quality control standards.

### Limited Constraints

Demand for its brand and revenue growth put pressure on the company’s traditional manufacturing processes, the most archaic of which was production scheduling. Planners and schedulers used basic spreadsheets with simplistic Gantt charts and struggled to interface with Microsoft Dynamics GP, manage inventory, and communicate with the MRP system (Material Requirement Planning).

To prevent constraints, the team had to check inventories manually, losing hours of time, before a job could be scheduled to the proper resources. What’s more, it was difficult to predict bottlenecks. And when they did, invariably more bottlenecks sprung up weeks later.

“Scheduling was very manual, and we ran into too many bottlenecks due to poor scheduling,” explains Gregory Van Leirsburg, the production scheduler at Standard Process. “Worse yet, we continually risked delays on customer deadlines, which was not acceptable any longer.”

Standard Process prepared to make a change. Four APS (Advanced Planning and Scheduling) software packages competed for the solution, and Standard Process selected **PlanetTogether’s powerful, easy-to-use, Microsoft .NET based APS platform, called Galaxy APS.**

### Easy to Integrate

The Planet consulting team carefully organized a data map and merged all of Standard Process’s product information, inventory statistics, and scheduling procedures, with the goal to create an efficient, user-sensitive system for the entire production plant. In fact, Planet earned high marks for a smooth integration into Standard’s existing systems.

“Now, we implement solutions to problems with confidence, and before constraints become a manufacturing issue. Galaxy has cut the number of “hot” jobs on our schedule so we can schedule resources more efficiently. That translates into a better work environment for everyone,” Van Leirsburg explains.

Employees have greater control over their workday. They view weekly schedules beforehand. LCD screens in their production areas display week-long lists of manufacturing orders, which give them the flexibility to allocate jobs to the proper department, resource, time, and status. They know exactly what to do and when, and can transition easily from job to job without searching for “the next step.” And if a last minute schedule change occurs, Galaxy APS responds quickly and makes the change visible for all employees to see.

## One Year Later

After one year in operation, PlanetTogether's APS platform streamlined an already hard-working (though inefficient) environment, and moved the company closer to the ideal of lean manufacturing.

Van Leirsburg sums up: "Since the implementation of PlanetTogether at our facility, we have been able to better meet our deadlines. Our production plant is faster and more efficient, which keeps our facility in better spirits and running smooth. But most important, Galaxy enables us to provide a quality product to our customers in a timely manner."

The next time you visit your vitamin shop, look for the Standard Process brand, and know you are on the road to better health.



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## 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.