



## Sumitomo Electric Lightwave Speeds to a New Galaxy

*Boosts Accuracy on Promise Dates by 8 Percent; Output by 16 Percent*

Billions of bundles of optical fiber lace the earth in a light-filled network of telecommunication signals. Energy moves. People connect. And life bustles on ever-widening bandwidth from Pittsburg to Perth.

Sumitomo Electric Lightwave (SEL) manufactures these amazing pure glass-silica fibers (similar in size to a human hair) for an elite product line of 6,000 different optical cable parts, assemblies and systems.



Communication networks, enterprise networks and equipment manufacturers would go dark without these strings of modern technology. Based in Research Triangle, NC, the 300-employee company rose to the summit of its industry due, in part, to its long reputation for the highest standards in research and development, design engineering and manufacturing since 1897.

Even still, Sumitomo Electric Lightwave, member of the mega family of companies in Sumitomo Electric Industries, decided the time had come to eliminate

the potential for any and all bottlenecks in its production scheduling.

To help understand and improve the factors that drive plant efficiency, Sumitomo turned to PlanetTogether Inc., a San Diego based Advanced Planning and Scheduling (APS) Software Company.

**“The challenge Sumitomo faced was a manufacturing imperative: To deliver on accurate promise dates for customized fiber optic infrastructures, and maximize supply chain resources to meet growing product demand,”** says Gary Bishop, director of manufacturing operations for SEL.

Bishop’s team underwent an intensive software evaluation, and concluded that only PlanetTogether met expectations on functionality and cost of ownership. **“We needed a high-power scheduling system geared for mass customization. Some companies may find what they need in basic packages. For those of us with massive throughput, the one size fits all approach doesn’t work,”** Bishop claims.

To ensure a worry-free integration, PlanetTogether worked closely with Accupointe, a leading specialist in systems integrations to ERP, CRM, and HRMS and BI solutions. Accupointe’s Dene Powell: **“We partner with PlanetTogether on many projects, from mid market to tier one, and are impressed with its innovation in the APS (Advanced Planning & Scheduling) arena.”**

PlanetTogether integrated its GALAXY APS platform to Sumitomo’s Manufacturing Execution System (MES). In short order, the Sumitomo planning and scheduling team saw the flows of orders throughout the supply chain, which allowed them to address constraints, solve bottlenecks, handle what-if

scenarios, and manage resources at a standard of efficiency not known before. Attention to detail guides the Planet team and compels it to invest considerable time in learning the operational profile of each client department.

Bishop affirmed, “We found the PlanetTogether personnel very professional in all respects. We felt they took an efficient approach to all aspects of the project, from the quote to implementation process, allowing us to keep expenses down and gain maximum value for our investment.”

### **Agility Rules**

The open-face view of Galaxy’s Gantt chart gives SEL a quick snapshot of time required for changeover and specific order runs on manufacturing lines. The drag and drop feature provides the means to manage resources in real time. And multiple schedulers now use the system simultaneously for measurable time and labor saving benefits.

“Another Galaxy benefit is the ability to integrate preventative maintenance schedules with manufacturing schedules. Commitments cannot be met without maximizing Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE); the freedom to block out time for preventative maintenance before the schedule is filled with orders increases our uptime and capacity,” Bishop notes.

Already, the integration of PlanetTogether with SEL’s MES produced two-way real time communication between plant operations, scheduling and customer service. Accuracy of shipment promise dates **improved by 8 percent, and production output levels increased 16 percent.**

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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.