FLEXIBILITY AND USER FRIENDLINESS OF PSL DATATRACK DRIVES I&G ENGINEERING'S FORWARD THINKING

Specialist CNC precision engineering company I&G Engineering Limited, based in 11,000 square feet premises near Swansea, produces high quality components in a variety of materials for many market sectors. The company has been established for some 40 years and has continuously invested in the latest CNC machining, inspection technology, CAD/CAM programming and production control software to improve its scope of customer services. This covers everything from batch production of hundreds of aluminium or stainless steel components to prototyping and precision manufacture of complex assemblies, typically for aerospace, medical and other specialist applications.

The company holds ISO 9001:2015 service quality accreditation and employs rigorous process control procedures to ensure client specifications are met in full. This includes close control of the production and administration behind every order and for this, the company's investment in PSL Datatrack production control software has played a vital role.

In the earlier years of I&G's existence, all customer quotations, purchase orders, delivery notes and invoices were raised by hand. "This was a very time consuming process, hard to organise and it was also very easy to make mistakes," says Director, Michael Evans. "As we were growing, customer numbers and order variations were increasing so the issue was getting bigger and becoming a problem. That's why, in 2001, we decided PSL Datatrack was the way forward."

I&G did investigate a number of different packages to replace their manual administration and it was soon recognised that PSL Datatrack offered the most powerful, user-friendly modular system that was built specifically to manage the processes of a subcontract engineering company like I&G. "Coupled with the support PSL Datatrack offered, it was definitely the way we wanted to push on with the business," comments Michael.

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Throughout its existence, I&G's key aim has been to maintain the highest standards of quality, flexibility, reliability and communication with customers on order status. PSL Datatrack has helped Michael and his team maintain and improve efficiency, thereby achieving these business aspirations. "We really are a quality driven company that is very flexible and our customers would say we are very reliable. We invest in our business to keep customer costs down and to allow us to be more flexible and dependable," he says.

Four staff members have been using PSL Datatrack for different purposes over many years, including raising customer quotations, works orders, delivery notes and invoices and purchase orders for suppliers, as well as producing process layouts for the shop floor. The system has slashed the amount of time spent on paperwork and what is more, by using the information held in PSL Datatrack, I&G can generate management charts and reports to investigate how and where improvements can be made in the business. This helps to maintain on-time deliveries and to identify how much capacity is available to increase intake of work.

Reports in the system provide monthly reviews of turnover and performance to help the company keep to its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). "We all find this very straightforward to use and after a small amount of in-house training for any new members of staff, they can also use PSL Datatrack without any problems," comments Michael. Indeed, in the years since the company's original investment, the support has been "fantastic" according to Michael. "If any new staff member using the PSL Datatrack system needs help, or we need any other technical support, we can ring and get it straight away. That being said, with the system being so easy to use, it's not often needed."

Whilst the areas of business managed by the PSL Datatrack system have been working very successfully for many years, I&G continuously explores other opportunities in just the same way as it considers investment in new CNC or CAM technology. With the modularity of PSL Datatrack, investing in

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new elements is straightforward in terms of compatibility and integration with the existing framework.

As a result, the Shop Floor Data Collection (SFDC) and Sequential Scheduler modules are in the pipeline, alongside visual Status Boards to give the I&G management team a closer look into real time production activities. SFDC will record the actual time taken to produce components compared with quoted times and maintain a history of when parts were made on which machines and by whom, as well as recording process deviations for the company to review and make process improvements. The Scheduler and Status Boards will provide up to date status of works orders and costs.

"This data will really drive forward our production flexibility and reliability," concludes Michael. For I&G, PSL Datatrack has been key to the company's success alongside all its other significant investments in shop floor technology. It has helped to underpin the company's drive for efficiency and customer service at a time when forward thinking and competitiveness are more important than ever.