



30 YEARS AT THE FOREFRONT OF PRODUCTION CONTROL SOFTWARE

PSL Datatrack is celebrating 30 years at the forefront of production control software development for precision engineering subcontractors. It all started in February 1988 when Prospec Systems, the company behind the software, introduced a software solution for precision engineering companies that offered a practical, simple and logical solution to managing production and improving overall business efficiency.

But what exactly is PSL Datatrack trying to achieve and why has it become so popular with the precision subcontract engineering sector? For all such organisations a system that manages quotations, sales and purchase order processing with manufacturing controls is vital. For some Datatrack users it has traditionally meant replacing a manual system that is simply a combination of excel spreadsheets and word documents. In this set up there is often no cross referencing, data is duplicated, managing it is very time consuming and reporting is difficult.



PSL Datatrack recognised these problems very early on and this led to the development of its purpose designed production control software for subcontract precision engineering companies. As such, the focus is on the specific controls and reporting that are required to manage the production of turned parts, machined components and any product requiring a manufacturing process. Amongst these specific controls are scheduling, shop floor data collection, gauge calibration, non conformance and tooling.

The software has been continuously developed since its conception 30 years ago so that today it is arguably the leading system of its type available in the UK and, in the eyes of some, is the industry standard system.

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Feedback from early adopters led to the formal development of the 'wish list' database that enables the company to register and manage all customer ideas for product development. This has become a major element in the development of the software and continues to be important, allowing the company to focus on the development of features that all users can benefit from. This has been achieved over the years with major upgrades such as the 2002 introduction of a new Scheduling module; the 2008 Purchase Invoicing module; the 2009 Dynamic Bill of Materials module and the 2013 CRM/Task module.

Datatrack customers are typically subcontract precision engineers, ranging from a one man band through to companies with 100+ employees. Some specialise in turning, milling or both whilst others also offer a range of other processes including grinding, EDM, wire erosion, 3D printing, finishing, electronics, fabrication and other services.

A number of early customers were members of the BTMA (British Turned Parts and Machined Components Association) which Prospec Systems were invited to join in 2003 and remain members today. During this time five presidents have been associated with companies actually using PSL Datatrack software, demonstrating the company's commitment to the subcontract precision engineering industry. The company has also been a member of the GTMA (Gauge and Tool Makers Association) for the last 11 years.

Today PSL Datatrack has a team of people providing software development, support and sales from its offices in Bracknell, Berkshire. The longevity of the company is based on the philosophy of knowing its customers well and fully understanding their changing production needs. This is borne out by the number of very long standing customers that PSL Datatrack is proud to have acquired over the years and continues to support.

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For the future, Geoff Gartland, Managing Director of PSL Datatrack, sees many challenges for the engineering sub-contract industry as we move into the era of post-BREXIT. “We are ready to meet those challenges by supplying software to assist all our customers in a changing environment for UK manufacturing and international trade. Our continuous R&D programme, together with feedback via the ‘wish list,’ will help us to provide the upgrades and additions to the functionality of PSL Datatrack that our customers will benefit from.”

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