A GUIDE TO PRODUCTION CONTROL SOFTWARE & IMPLEMENTATION

Production control software is specifically designed to offer a measure of control in the production environment. That in itself begs the question, what do we actually mean by 'production?' It may seem like a simple question, but production means many different things to many different people and businesses. Production can be simply defined as the making or manufacturing of components from raw materials, but that covers everything from mass production of components to batch production and the assembly of components into a finished item.

The next step is to define what is meant by 'control.' It is essential that a business has relevant procedures, rules and limits in place that give company management the control and information they need to make decisions that benefit the business. They should never be in the situation where the concept of 'the computer says no' rules their production decisions.

PSL Datatrack production control software is designed specifically for subcontract precision engineering companies, with particular strengths in managing the production of turned parts, machined components and assemblies. The software can be tailored to suit a company's individual requirements, which is a major advantage over off-the-shelf solutions available - the concept of 'one size fits all' is definitely not acceptable. Subcontract precision engineering businesses vary in size in just the same manner as in any other industry.

A larger business will need more refined processes and tighter control than a smaller business, which may be owner-managed and/or employ staff who wear many hats and have multiple responsibilities. A smaller company may therefore have a need for more flexible requirements. The production control system used must reflect these variations in order to be effective, provide the required return on investment and, most importantly, be of benefit to the business.

-more-

Prospec Systems Limited
Lily Hill House,
Lily Hill Road,
Bracknell,
Berkshire.   RG12 2SJ

Proud to be members of

Registered in England No. 2170121. Registered Office: As above

A GUIDE TO PRODUCTION CONTROL SOFTWARE & IMPLEMENTATION
Page 2

When considering investment in production control software the whole manufacturing process and the staff involved must be considered. For a subcontractor this typically starts with the initial quotation, but the next time the phone rings their production priorities and available capacity can change. However, the need to manage the process of dealing with any sales order from that initial quotation through all the production processes to the invoice will always exist. These stages encompass purchasing, stock control, shop floor paperwork, traceability, scheduling and quality to name but a few areas in the production process. The selected system has to be capable of dealing with all of these variables.

One frequently asked question is "Why are modular systems the right approach?" Simplicity should benefit the user, not the developer. Many users will only ever need a percentage of the features a complete system has to offer. Customers should not pay for modules they have no intention of using, no matter the cost. With a modular system, the investment is scaled in a fair and practical manner.

Many businesses already have specialised equipment and software in place for certain areas of their business, be it the latest machine tools with variable technical ability and speed or time and attendance, CAD/CAM or accounting software. It is PSL Datatrack's fundamental belief that customers should be able to pick and choose the best software tools for their various requirements.

Production control software is not only relevant to precision engineering subcontractors. Taking the principals applied to precision engineering, companies in other manufacturing areas including PCBs, box build, fabrication, special purpose machines and product assembly are already benefiting from such software.

Another consideration is whether a UK business needs software developed and supported in the UK. Indeed, the style of production and the manner in which business is conducted can vary between countries; some factors may be legislative and others may be purely commercial. Overall, however, it is important that suppliers of such business critical systems are able to react and respond to ever changing requirements and a system designed and focussed on UK manufacturing will do just that.

-more-

A GUIDE TO PRODUCTION CONTROL SOFTWARE & IMPLEMENTATION
Page 3

Once the most suitable production control system has been selected, the next stage is implementation and from our experience, no two are the same. The expertise and background that users already have, coupled with the areas in the business the system is being implemented in are major factors in putting a plan together. It is essential that the plan takes these factors into account.

For some businesses, whole days and classroom style training may be right, whereas for others a web-based, bite-size chunk implementation may be the most effective as this approach will fit in alongside the day job of company personnel. Some PSL Datatrack users have gone live after as little as one day of training which is a testament to the logical approach and well thought out screens, together with our thorough understanding of the requirements of a precision engineering business.

If companies are replacing an old, existing system it may be a major time saving exercise to have useful data imported to kick-start the implementation. PSL Datatrack has many years of experience and skill in this area to help customers get their new system up and running as quickly as is practical.

Cost is always a major consideration and can be hard to quantify. The cost to the business is not limited just to paying for the software or training but is also down to the time taken to become familiar with the software and the speed with which users are able to navigate around the system. It is vital to ensure that whatever software you choose is suited to your business and not just your budget.

The notion that information is power is underlined in the many PSL Datatrack production control software customer case studies. For these companies the software has become an essential tool not just for managing their businesses, but for helping to strengthen and grow them. Many of these case studies are available from our website at www.psldatatrack.com/news.

by Geoff Gartland, Managing Director, PSL Datatrack

Prospec Systems Limited
Lily Hill House,
Lily Hill Road,
Bracknell,
Berkshire.   RG12 2SJ

Proud to be members of

Registered in England No. 2170121. Registered Office: As above