Case Study

DIX Metals, Inc.

Forward-moving companies have the distinct advantage of being able to watch their competition in a rear-view mirror. They are constantly seeking out new technology to improve their business, and searching for new ways to better serve their customers. DIX Metals, Inc. of Huntington Beach, California — a value-added metals service center specializing in close-tolerance sawing, grinding and milling — is one such example. DIX has committed itself to a philosophy of continuous improvement, and is constantly seeking ways to anticipate and meet their customers' future needs.

Primarily, DIX customers are OEMs and job shops involved in machining operations. However, a significant portion of their business also caters to companies such as ITT Industries, Hewlett Packard, Motorola, 3M and IBM.

When searching for a fully integrated system with extensive inventory management, processing abilities and cost reporting capabilities, DIX Metals turned to Epicor Software Corporation for help. They first chose Epicor's Vista solution in the fall of 1998, then moved to Epicor's Vantage system in October 2001. "We stayed with Epicor because of our four-year relationship with the Vista support team. The support team was a great resource in problem solving situations, and I had confidence that if we remained an Epicor customer, our needs would continue to be a priority," says Pablo Garza, vice president of Operations at DIX Metals, Inc.

Company Name:
DIX Metals, Inc.

Location:
Huntington Beach, California

Number of Employees:
60

Services:
A make-to-order enterprise that provides value-added metals service center capabilities and specializes in close-tolerance sawing, grinding and milling.

Critical Needs:
Mission critical supply-chain management (SCM) tools and business intelligence, enabling them to manage growth and efficiently handle future business requirements.

Selected Solutions:
Vista by Epicor
Vantage by Epicor

Ꜫ epicor
Software Corporation

Case Study
DIX Metals, Inc.

Migrating from Vista to Vantage

When DIX implemented Vista in 1997, the solution worked well. In the past four years, however, the company went from $7 million to $10 million in annual sales, a growth rate of 30 percent. While being very flexible, the Vista system was designed for the needs of smaller manufacturers, and with a 15 concurrent user environment, the level of functionality required by DIX's users was beginning to outpace the current system.

After systematically defining their systems requirements, DIX spent three months evaluating software solutions. In the end, they went to back to Epicor and determined that the logical ERP choice was Vantage because of existing familiarity of terminologies resulting in reduced overall training costs. The Vantage solution also provided a fully integrated system with a user-friendly customer service interface for the company's inside sales team, inventory management capabilities, job planning and extensive cost reporting features.

In addition, DIX's environment required an industrial-grade database that could provide their users the speed and performance to effectively handle day-to-day internal transactions flawlessly. Garza felt that the Vantage system would greatly enhance the implementation process and level off the learning curve. "While the Vista system taught users how to work in an integrated structure and offered a fast implementation timeline, Vantage would continue along those lines by providing an increased depth of business intelligence."

Epicor's aggressive growth incentive program allowed DIX to migrate from Vista to Vantage as their business requirements changed. Epicor applied the company's entire software investment in Vista toward the purchase of Vantage, which was planned since purchasing Vista. At the time Vista was purchased, DIX was not ready for the robust and enhanced Vantage solution. "When we were ready to move to Vantage, Epicor was there to support us," Garza adds.

Report Builder and Visual Scheduling

"Vantage's versatility was very important," says Garza. "The Report Builder afforded us the ability to build and integrate custom reports into our business flow, allowing our users to access critical data." With Vantage Visual Scheduling, departments can be broken down individually or by work center and loaded according to capacity and process capability. Furthermore, full visibility of work center load can be accessed by anyone using the system. This is especially important when planning available capacity for new business opportunities.

Real Time Data Collection and Labor Reporting

Vantage's Real Time Data Collection and Labor Reporting tools are excellent in providing supervisors with a clear picture of resources available for the day. Standard reports can be generated, which outline time and attendance of employees, labor and machine efficiency and scrap ratios. These real-time reporting tools provide excellent visibility of potential shop floor problems and root causes can be determined with minimal effort.

Vantage Brings Benefits

Since implementing Vantage, the DIX Metals team has been impressed with immediate and significant results. They now have full traceability of material issued to jobs, real time tracking of employee hours, comprehensive backlog reports and increased accuracy of order processing. The inside sales group has embraced the Quoting and Order Entry modules, and for the first time, DIX accountants can put together a financial picture at a moment's notice.

With Vantage, DIX Metals streamlined their order entry process and have seen a 25 percent measured increase in productivity. This increase is due to the efficient transactions handled within the database structure. The Job Linking feature within the order entry module has increased productivity between 15 and 20 percent by bringing critical, comprehensive data in to the planning functions and preventing questions that typically slow the process. "The Vantage system has improved our overall ability to process information more efficiently across the board," notes Garza.

Additionally, the QA team can now maintain online inspection and first article reports. The Quality Module inside Vantage further reduces DIX's dependency on paper and improves their ability to follow-up on corrective actions. DIX is looking forward to implementing the Epicor Customer Portal via the Internet, which expands their customer service to 24 X 7 and allows their customers to check order status without making a phone call.

Looking Ahead

DIX Metals is looking forward to a prosperous future. In May, 1999, DIX moved into their newly built 111,000 square foot facility in Huntington Beach, California. The implementation of Vantage software and this physical expansion will enable DIX Metals to reach new heights in providing customers a greater variety of metal finishing services and better overall service. Garza sums it up, saying, "DIX Metals has built a reputation on quality work and customer service. We pride ourselves on exceeding customer expectations. Vantage will add a new dimension to our IT infrastructure; it will enable our company to gain the needed competitive edge to effectively handle current and future business requirements."

An inside look at DIX Metals, Inc.