

When Less Is More - An E-Z-MRP Case Study

1. Introduction

Water Witch, Inc. located in Santee, California – maker of switches, sensors, timers, and alarms for bilge systems for the marine/boating industry – wanted an automated manufacturing system even before starting production. What's unusual is that Water Witch has only six employees and does under \$1 million in sales annually. But the company president made it a top priority to begin his enterprise with a fully automated MRP system.

Water Witch – whose customers include private owners of trailer boats, sport fishing boats, yachts, and even the Coast Guard and U.S. Navy – chose E-Z-MRP™ as its solution, because E-Z-MRP™ is designed to give even the smallest manufacturing operation the ability to run a full-featured MRP system that any company, no matter how small, can implement successfully.

2. Challenge

When San Diego-based Water Witch spun off from its parent company, Sensatron, it was faced with the usual problem of controlling inventories and manufacturing operations. On-going development of new products also created a requirement for product pricing and configuration management.

The small size of the operation – six employees, 25 products, each with 75 to 100 components – also meant that conventional manufacturing systems were financially out of reach. They were too costly and required too many resources and too much time and effort to implement and maintain.

Nevertheless, it was simply not an option for Water Witch President Tony Abbott to start this operation without the advantages of an automated system to do MRP, control inventories, track work orders and purchase orders, and maintain costed bills of material.

3. Solution

To control manufacturing operations, Abbott successfully implemented E-Z-MRP™ at Water Witch's parent company, Sensatron, when Sensatron was in its early stages. So he was familiar with the extensive capabilities of E-Z-MRP™ and its low cost. He also knew that the system could be implemented in a matter of days, and could be easily run and maintained by relatively unskilled office staff.

So Abbott selected E-Z-MRP™ as Water Witch's manufacturing systems solution.

E-Z-MRP™ – from Beach Access Software of San Diego – controls Water Witch's inventories, plans and executes production, purchasing, and sub-contract work, and provides costing and sophisticated configuration management. And the cost for the full-

blown MRP system was more than reasonable – only \$2,995 for the 500 part version and under \$10,000 for the unlimited version.

4. Results

Today Water Witch enjoys a degree of control over its operation – highly unusual for a company its size. Using E-Z-MRP™, Water Witch has “full control of all my products,” Abbott says. Specifically, the company has --

1. configuration control over its expanding line of over 25 different products
2. visibility over the cost of each product and all components
3. control of sub-contract orders
4. inventory minimized through the E-Z-MRP™ reports, which give visibility over downstream raw material requirements
5. on-time delivery of customer orders through control of and visibility over the work process

Most importantly, Water Witch’s Abbott says he has never experienced a shortage and has never missed a schedule. “I don’t understand why any small company doesn’t use E-Z-MRP™,” he says.

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