

LOOS & CO., INC.

Leading global manufacturer of stainless steel wire and cable products turns to Synergy Resources to develop robust scheduling using Priority Manager, a highly flexible extension to the core VISUAL product.

“We knew what we needed. It was a matter of working closely with Synergy Resources to ensure we both got a solution that added value to the basic VISUAL Enterprise solution. And we did.”

JEFF RICHMOND
SYSTEMS SUPPORT ANALYST

About the company

Loos & Co. is organized into four divisions that supply one another in the manufacture of a variety of progressively more complex finished products. BTS/BTO production starts with product from its Wire Division, which produces stainless steel wire that is both a finished end item and a component consumed by the Rope Division in the production of cable. Both wire and rope products can be consumed by the Extrusion Division that adds protective plastic and vinyl coating in multiple colors.

Company: **Loos & Co., Inc.**

Address: **1 Cable Road, Pomfret, CT 06258**

Website: **www.loosco.com**

Number of Employees: **400**

Products & Services: **Stainless steel wire rope, cable and assemblies.**

Challenges

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steel wire that is both a finished end item and a component consumed by the Rope Division in the production of cable. Both wire and rope products can be consumed by the Extrusion Division that adds protective plastic and vinyl coating in multiple colors. The Assembly Division consumes material from all three, adding hooks, fittings, and other hardware to complete customer orders.

Linked production and sequencing of work orders between divisions makes for challenging scheduling scenarios. This is especially true given potentially small, individual BTO quantities and setups/changeovers that are as long as six hours with some work centers, such as furnaces requiring different temperatures for varying wire diameters, and color changes in the extrusion process.

At any given time, 3,000 work orders – give or take – are in process somewhere on the 300,000 sq. ft. shop floor at Loos & Co. Over 6,000 bills-of-material (BOMS) are represented in the full catalogue of component and finished end items of the Pomfret, Conn.-based enterprise. Work-in-process at such volume can involve 17,000 different operations.

Setting priorities and the most efficient sequences for meeting production schedules is a highly complex endeavor. Loos & Co. heavily depends on its five production planners to maximize throughput, minimize waste and costs, and meet customer expectations.

Loos & Co. replaced its Unix-based MRP system in 2004 with Infor VISUAL Enterprise. Improvements in managing the business were significant, but planners still needed greater flexibility in scheduling than standard functionality provided. They routinely worked late, often resorting to manual schedule board techniques to do the magic that was required of their jobs. But working outside the system resulted in the „real’ plant schedule never accurately being depicted in the system – often inadvertently compounding the challenge due to limited visibility to actual status of shop floor production.

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“Side processes work – but they don’t automatically provide visibility in VISUAL. If a planner makes a change but doesn’t update VISUAL, sales can’t trust what’s shown in the system regarding availability of a finished order,” says Jeff Richmond, system support analyst at Loos & Co.

Additional, critical system functionality was achieved through partnering with Synergy Resources. The result: Priority Manager.

Priority Manager is an add-on extension to VISUAL Scheduling that accommodates the unique demands of harmonizing work orders to meet the ever-changing dynamics of sequencing and synchronizing production at Loos & Co. “Priority Manager builds on the existing functionality in VISUAL. It enables planners to quickly and easily make changes – and view the impact – before adding changes back into VISUAL Scheduling,” Richmond says.

Priority Manager extends the view of VISUAL from a single work order to consider multiple work orders as a group. Views can be created by sorting and filtering data already in existence within the system, including customer information, order dates, products, and work centers, among others. “You also have the ability to add additional information, if you want,” he says, to represent any scenario you encounter or want to evaluate.

“Priority Manager enables planners to define things in a certain order to effect change in a certain manner so that they can know the outcome” before changes are made within VISUAL Scheduling.

“You can manage by exception – I want this sequence on this machine on this date. It gives you much greater control – and much greater visibility to what is actually happening out on the shop floor,” Richmond states.

“Priority Manager is greatly empowering. It makes making changes a whole lot easier. It’s the tool that enabled us to take the schedule board down off the wall. Our planners don’t stay late anymore,” Richmond says. “We haven’t encountered any scenario where it can’t provide the answer we need.”