



ULTIMATE WIREFORMS, INC.

Leading global manufacturer of orthodontic products employs VISUAL to gain control and visibility over operations

“We’re a very customer-focused company. At any given time, we have between 1200 and 1300 open work orders on the floor. We used to have one person dedicated to chasing down the location and status of an order when a customer called. What used to take us considerable time and effort, now – with the aid of visual – takes only a few clicks and we have an answer in seconds.”

DOREEN GOULET
DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

About the company

Ultimate Wireforms was founded 22 years ago to provide high quality orthodontic products and services to a worldwide customer base of dealers and distributors directly serving orthodontic practices.

The company’s focus on quality customer service has reaped consistent year-on-year business growth. Ultimate is known for innovative product development, contract manufacturing services, and packaging development and marketing assistance.

Company: **Ultimate Wireforms, Inc.**

Address

200 Central Street, Bristol, CT 06010

Website: **www.ultimatewireforms.com**

Number of Employees: **70**

Products & Services

Manufacturer of high performance orthodontic products; and design and development services for proprietary products and packaging .

Challenges

In 2003, Ultimate Wireforms organized operations as The Ultimate Companies, with its basic manufacturing capabilities being augmented by Ultimate NiTi Technologies, Inc., established to concentrate on innovative, advanced new product development. In 2004, Ultimate do Brazil, Ltda., became a wholly owned and operated manufacturing facility in Sao Paulo, whose labor-intensive manufacturing expertise and efficiency has helped boost service and reduce overall costs, resulting in improved market competitiveness.

After Ultimate Wireforms reorganized operations in 2003-2004, positioning itself for greater growth and efficiency in operations, it was natural that the Bristol, Connecticut-based company looked into implementing an enterprise information system capable of supporting those goals. It had been managing operations primarily with the limited reach of its accounting packages, a couple of proprietary databases, and a host of manual systems.

“We knew what we needed, but it was a difficult process at the start because we didn’t know what was out there,” says Greg Lawless, information systems manager. “We started by looking at 10 different systems, then narrowed that down to four. Ultimately we selected Infor VISUAL because it most closely aligned with what we needed. It allowed us to do the most with the least modification of our business processes. It’s also very scalable – which has supported our growth.

“VISUAL has helped us improve efficiency in inventory management by about 20 percent. It’s also helped streamline order entry as much as 30 to 40 percent. But I couldn’t begin to put a number on how significantly the system has improved overall operations’ workflow control.”

High on the list of needs was that for greater visibility into overall supply and demand to improve efficiencies and customer responsiveness. “Most of our products have upwards of 10 to 15 operations. When we first implemented the system in 2005, we probably averaged 800 to 1,000 open work orders on the floor,” says Doreen Goulet, Director of Customer Service. “When a customer called, VISUAL gave us the visibility we needed to easily answer questions about their shipment.”

“The material planning window in the VISUAL Inventory Control module, coupled with the Bar Code Transaction (BTS) module, provided a great tool for getting a quick snapshot for where we stood. It enabled us to provide accurate commitments on shipping – and if need be, the information we needed to help expedite an order,” she says.

Says Lawless: “Before VISUAL, we used to have to go out on the floor and yell, asking workers to tell us where an item was.”

The BTS module has been especially vital to augmenting improvement visibility, but also in eliminating manual effort and human error. “It’s greatly aided us in streamlining our processes,” Goulet says.

The company builds to finished goods inventory as well as to customer orders. Because its products are classified as „medical devices,’ traceability of both components and finished goods is a critical, mandated requirement. “Where before it would take us upwards of 30 minutes to trace finished goods to raw materials – hoping that everybody had filed everything correctly, we can do a trace now in less than 60 seconds,” Goulet reports.

She says “VISUAL has helped us improve efficiency in inventory management by about 20 percent. It’s also helped streamline order entry as much as 30 to 40 percent. But I couldn’t begin to put a number on how significantly the system has improved overall operations’ workflow control.”

IS Manager Lawless is impressed with the quality and commitment to support and service provided by Synergy Resources, Synergy’s local value-added reseller. “They’re extremely knowledgeable and always available. Even after hours, if I call with a question, they’re always happy to help out.

“And I can’t say enough about the support we’ve received from Infor tech support,” he says. “It’s been outstanding. We had some initial concerns when Infor first acquired the product, but they’ve really stepped up. And they’ve invested a lot in enhancing the project in ways that directly support our continued business growth.”