

Controlling costs and improving performance with MOM

CASE STUDY

At a Glance

ORGANIZATION



REGION

United States of America

KEY CHALLENGE

Automate planning process and move to actual costing

KEY BENEFIT

Improved production and commercial performance

INDUSTRY

Medical Device

END USER MARKET

Wheelchair users

SOLUTION

SYSPRO 8 Manufacturing Operations Management (MOM)

Customer Profile

Bodypoint designs and manufactures postural supports that improve safety, comfort, function and independence for wheelchair users. Since 1991, Bodypoint has been manufacturing in Seattle, Washington, and its Quality Management System has been certified compliant with ISO 9001:2015. The company tests all its products – available in more than 40 countries – to all applicable ISO, EN and ANSI/RESNA standards for safety and durability.

The Business Challenge

Although Bodypoint already used SYSPRO for financial and manufacturing management, a lack of accurate capacity data, manual manufacturing processes and difficulties with tracking minimums and maximums led to inefficiencies. From an overall perspective, the manual system was cumbersome and costly.

The Solution

Bodypoint implemented the SYSPRO Manufacturing Operations Management (MOM) solution to automate the planning process, eliminate paper-based work orders and gain the ability to track each job through the system.

The Outcome

The system went live in January 2021 and the company's initial goals for scheduling, costing and capacity planning were achieved in less than eight months. SYSPRO MOM has helped improve Bodypoint's production and commercial performance.

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Without reservation, I would highly recommend SYSPRO MOM to any company seeking to automate their scheduling and manufacturing processes. The benefits of readily available access to all facets of scheduling and production information, combined with a system that is operator friendly and easy to use, result in significant time and efficiency savings while also providing a system that supports any company's continuous improvement efforts.

- Ed Hanrahan, Vice-President of Operations, Bodypoint

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Individual designs

Bodypoint's end customers are wheelchair users with complex rehabilitation needs. Its mission is to create exceptional products that enable individuals in wheelchairs to improve their lives.

Ed Hanrahan, Bodypoint's Vice-President of Operations, says: "Correct body positioning leads to better functioning and a more fulfilling life, whether that is something as simple as reaching across the dinner table or competing in the Paralympic Games. For the users, details matter, so every part and material, no matter how small, is carefully selected for maximum performance and made to exacting specifications."

A lot of care and thought goes into Bodypoint's anatomically-contoured supports that increase individual function and encourage regular use by remaining comfortable for all-day wear. The product designs use padding that won't over-stretch, webbing that resists slipping and stitching that doesn't pull out, resulting in products that can be machine washed repeatedly without fraying or falling apart.

"Most of our products have to be prescribed by a medical physician, occupational therapist, physical therapist or other medical professional. They cannot just be bought off the shelf," Hanrahan says.

Bodypoint has suppliers in the United States and around the world, including China, Vietnam, Taiwan and Korea. A variety of parts and materials are used across its product lines to meet the needs of users with different diagnoses and activity levels. For example, some people benefit from stretch materials that allow controlled movement, while others need the firmer support provided by non-stretch fabric.

A low-profile push-button buckle on a pelvic belt might work well for someone with good hand function, while a user with less dexterity needs a design that requires less force to attach and release.

Inventory, stock-keeping and production management

Bodypoint orders and stores its material by individual stock codes, but for WIP inventory, they categorize products by 'families' according to their use.

"For example, we will have a group of shoulder harnesses, a group of bath belts, two-point hip belts, four-point hip belts and so on," Hanrahan says. "Within those families, we break down into individual stock codes. And that's where we get specific on materials, hardware applications and different sizes."

There are approximately 25 product families or categories; once it is broken down into the individual product stock codes and applications relevant to individual needs, the list extends to over 1,000 products; this is where operations management becomes complicated.

Bodypoint already had a SYSPRO ERP system as the core of its financial and manufacturing management. The manufacturing process was manual, typically with paper orders which had very specific instructions. Engineering drawings and specification pages had to be attached to every work order so that the operators of sewing machines and final assembly knew how to manufacture each item. This left room for errors and miscommunications, and this was not the only problem.

"For capacity planning purposes, we had no accurate system to account for and plan out our labor and materials," Hanrahan explains. "For materials, we were doing everything with kanbans, which work well in some situations. But if your business is growing, for example, kanbans tend to grow your inventory. In terms of capacity modeling and keeping track of what we were doing and the way we were using minimums and maximums, it was adding unnecessary cost. Labor capacity was being tracked manually using Excel spreadsheets."

Paper-based inefficiency

The manual system was inefficient. According to Hanrahan, searching for a particular item was 'like looking for a needle in a haystack' because so much work was being issued to the production floor at any time.

Costing was done on an average basis, rather than actual costings. At the beginning of the process, Bodypoint's operations management typically created an MRP report, referred to the report for min-max levels and decided what was needed. Work orders and drawings were printed, attached together and then manually scheduled. There were 31 folders, one for each day of the month. Work orders were filed by the date they needed to be issued to the floor; the orders went out, then there was a window of time in which to complete it and, when it was done, the job would be manually closed. The system worked, but it was manual, cumbersome and costly.

Hanrahan knew that the system had to be replaced.

Then he had a chance meeting with John Grima of LYNQ MES at SYSPRO's 2019 WAVE conference in Huntington Beach, California.

A glimpse of something better

"John brought me up to speed on what the SYSPRO MOM (Manufacturing Operations Management) tool could do," he says. "We were looking to automate the planning process, to find a way to eliminate all these paper-based work orders. I wanted to have point-of-view access to drawings and specifications for the operators on the production floor and to take the process from manual to being able to track each job electronically through the system.

"Plus, I wanted to take us from average costing to actual costing, to be clear on what it actually costs to make a particular product. The SYSPRO MOM system could do all of that."

Bodypoint is a small business, which meant that installation could have been a challenge; the company could not afford to take people out of production for days at a time to install, integrate and train.

"I had the help of others on my team, and Curtis Patching of LYNQ MES, who delivered the training, is one of the best trainers I have worked with in my 30-plus years of manufacturing," says Hanrahan. "MOM is not the first new system I have implemented. The attention to detail, thoroughness and accuracy he brought to the table were wonderful." Bodypoint went live in January 2021. The question is: was it a success?

Improved production performance and cost savings

All the preparation, planning and extra time taken to ensure the implementation was done correctly has paid off with a system that has helped improve Bodypoint's production and commercial performance.

Hanrahan is delighted to report that the successful installation of SYSPRO MOM has delivered an 80% reduction in the paper used for the manufacturing process, using an intuitive and automated system. Inspection is done at each machine, rather than waiting until the end of the line.

"The new system allows me to track employees, materials and quality issues and notifies me if there's an issue," Hanrahan says. "It provides accurate data on operations and overall job costs. Average costing has been eliminated. It's helped me fine-tune my bills of materials and time costings and make them more accurate."

SYSPRO MOM has already saved two hours of paperwork time per day, and there are other clear savings. A key production management position is becoming available due to a person retiring at the end of 2023. Thanks to the SYSPRO MOM system, Bodypoint will not need to replace that position. In the meantime, that position will be assisting in other areas and working on other projects.

All the operators – the majority of whom speak English as a second language – are using touchscreens instead of paperwork orders and drawings at every machine. Paperwork is expected to be cut by a further 10% in the near future.

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Improved understanding and visibility

"Our main objectives in automating our scheduling process were to understand our machine and labor capacity; move away from average costing to actual manufacturing and production cost; and obtain other vital information that would help us target higher efficiency – all in a system that was easy to use," says Hanrahan. "These are the opportunities that I saw in the SYSPRO MOM system."

Bodypoint is very lean and has a strong focus on continuous improvement, so it was essential to have that scheduling and costing information readily accessible to drive forward.

"I can now do that. I can dive into whatever buckets of information I want to look at," he explains.

"All our initial goals for scheduling, costing and capacity planning have been achieved. We aren't doing any of that manually anymore. Understanding our actual product costs is extremely helpful."



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About SYSPRO

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SYSPRO's ERP solution empowers customers to take the next step – whether it is expanding into new territories, adding new product lines, transforming business processes, or driving innovation. Through our ERP software, customers gain access to solutions, processes, and tools to assist in the management of data for key business insights and informed decision making. The solution is scalable and can be deployed in the cloud, on-premise, or both, and accessed via the web on any device to provide customers with choice and flexibility.

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