



MSU

MSU, is a relatively small operation with eighteen employees. The shop is primarily manually operated yet computer systems have been assisting them in the management side of their business for over a decade. Their first computer system was purchased 11 years ago to handle the basic accounting requirements payables, receivables, general ledger. Nine years ago, they added an AutoCAD system to facilitate the preparation of shop drawings. Over the next few years' additional systems were purchased to assist in other areas of the business estimating, inventory management, costing. MSU had a number of computer systems, but none of them integrated with each other. As the company grew, managing these different systems became more and more cumbersome. Information accuracy and timeliness were being compromised and the negative effects on the business were starting to show on the bottom line. MSU needed an integrated ERP system. According to Weber, "We looked at a number of programs and decided to go with VISUAL primarily because Shop 9000 is right here in Ontario. Local support was important to us." Weber continues, "The product also suited our needs."

Since implementing the system, MSU has realized significant benefits. Weber describes "I know where the money is going. This is critical in a fabrication shop. I need to know if it took 10, 20 or 40 hours to make a product. Only with this information, can I make informed business decisions Do I need to change my pricing?... Should I stop making this product?... Should I be promoting this product?" The VISUAL system also allowed MSU to analyze their business processes and make some productive changes. Weber continues, "The system has also forced us to create and follow standards and procedures. Being a small operation, we used to run the operation 'on the fly'. When implementing the system we were forced to look at our business and decide on standard procedures. We're more logical and professional now, and because of this, we are able to grow our business without adding overhead."

Customer service has also improved since implementing the VISUAL system. Weber comments "We now have access to up-to-the-minute information we know the backlog on the shop floor, and are able to provide accurate estimates on our deliverables. Our customers are getting their shipments on-time and we're able to fulfill these commitments without pulling our hair out."

MSU are also finding the VISUAL system useful in inventory management. Weber adds "With on-line access to our inventory levels we are now making informed decisions on when to buy the materials to meet our order requirements." When asked about the best feature in VISUAL, Weber had this to say, "For me, the Gross Profit Report is the most meaningful report in the entire system. I have always wanted to know how much money we make on a job, and on which parts. Because I know what my costs are going to be before I quote a job, I am in a better position to offer a competitive price while maintaining my margin requirements."

Company Overview

Founded in 1977, the MSU operation is a 620 square meter facility located in Mississauga Ontario, which houses a full range of metal fabricating equipment.

MSU specializes in the custom design and fabrication of client specified products, and manufactures corrosion-resistant aluminum and stainless steel railing systems, stairways, access hatches, climbing rungs, ladders, fall arrest systems, safety platforms and access handles for the water and wastewater industries.