

What a difference a week makes

Platinum Precision Engineering, based in County Down, Northern Ireland manufacture precision machined components for sectors such as aerospace and automotive. In terms of efficiency and streamlining its operational processes, the installation of 123insight ERP/MRP software has been a revelation. PES reports.

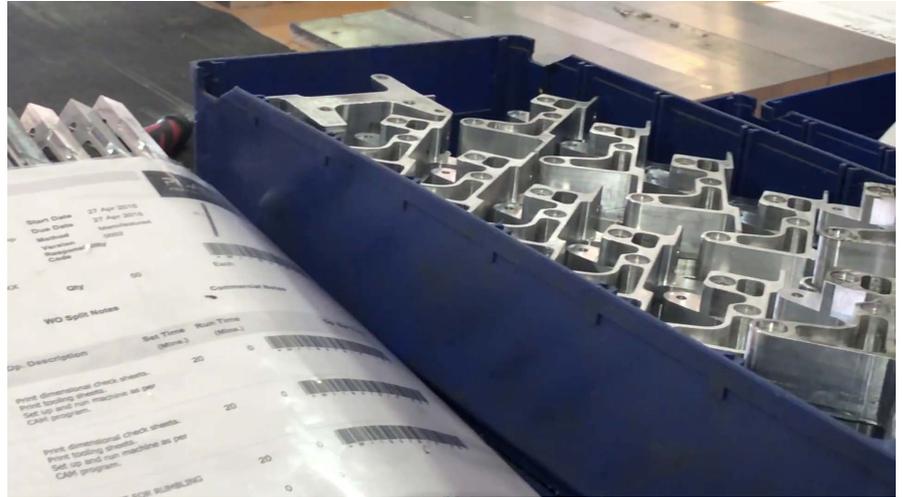
Platinum Precision Engineering was founded in 2014 and, after using spreadsheets and paper for two years, decided it needed a more comprehensive system.

Managing director Ross Fleming noted that the time to process orders was growing faster than the orders themselves: "As the business started to grow,

purchase orders were getting bigger, going from one or two lines to maybe 20. We're a manufacturing company so we are constantly timing machines and people. The process of getting everything on a spreadsheet, getting prices, copying/pasting between spreadsheets, printing a PDF and then checking it, with a 20-line purchase order could easily



Platinum Precision Engineering's managing director, Ross Fleming



have taken two hours to make sure that everything is perfect. That's before you have to start printing out works orders and plan production."

Platinum reviewed the market, initially discovering 123insight at an ADS SC21 aerospace event. Ultimately, at that time the company decided to write its own

system: "At that stage I believed that what we do is quite simplistic, so I employed a local software engineer to develop an MRP system," Mr Fleming advises. "It took about a year to realise that we had no chance of achieving this - it's more complex than it looks on paper."

Mr Fleming then made the decision to contact

Drew McCoubrey, managing director and founder of QMS Insight, the local dealer for 123insight and attended an Evaluation Workshop in the summer of 2017.

These workshops provide a complete overview of the system in 2.5 hours, answering any technical questions. He was also already aware that two of his customers used 123insight, one of which is a major supplier to the aerospace industry: "I thought that if it's good enough for a company that's buying and manufacturing a large number of components and assemblies, then it's good enough for us."

Seamless and simple

Platinum Precision registered to receive a 123insight licence in August 2017, with training, provided by QMS Insight, scheduled for early September. Mr Fleming was able to get to grips with the system quickly: "It was fairly straightforward. I took plenty of notes, and the good thing about Drew is that he's always at the end of the phone. We had a couple of phone calls (after training) and I was able to handle the implementation myself pretty easily. It was pretty seamless and simple."

The company also took advantage of 123insight's remote installation at just £295, whereby 123 Insight

staff connected to Platinum's server remotely installed the 123insight system and connected and configured it to Platinum's SQL server database.

Implementation took just a week with Mr Fleming noting that it was far from the challenging experience that he was anticipating: "It was like a new toy that I wanted to get up and running," he recalls. "It was actually very satisfying processing our first purchase order, seeing everything at the click of a button, creating purchase orders for material, and printing works orders."

Instantly, the day-to-day pressures were drastically reduced for Mr Fleming. Processes that previously proved extremely time-consuming were now reduced to a few mouse-clicks: "We went from a very long process to realising that once you get your parts entered, your structures right, and your billet prices and subcontracting set-up, you can take that process down to literally minutes."

Instant access

As a company that holds ISO9001 accreditation and is moving towards AS9100, Platinum needed a system that would provide the end-to-end traceability required for both materials and treatments. Mr Fleming notes: "123insight ties everything together. I don't have to go looking for anything as it's all stored in the system. We can also drag and drop attachments, which is a fool proof feature for the ISO9001 and AS9100 accreditations."

Platinum also rolled Shop Floor Data Collection (SFDC) onto the shopfloor, which not only provided Mr Fleming with accurate data about job runtimes, but also allowed other staff to quickly answer customer queries: "We've just starting using SFDC for clocking on and off jobs, which helps new staff understand where jobs are on the shopfloor. So, when customers phone up for the status anyone can easily go in and check out where a job is."

Mr Fleming also feels that 123insight has helped to improve the image of the company to both customers



and suppliers due to the ability to customise all documentation: "We now have a professional look on all our documents – whether it's orders going to suppliers or sales acknowledgements to customers. Being able to put your own logo on reports gives that professional approach," he affirms.

One of Platinum Precision's largest customers is also a 123insight user. The two companies use this to their benefit by employing

electronic data exchange (EDI) to ensure that orders and work in progress match seamlessly, with a 100% success rate to date.

"We get an open order report sent through to us on a twice-weekly basis," Mr Fleming explains. "We can then export that same information from 123 in terms of our sales orders, and then through Excel we can match each record off to make sure that what our customer thinks we are making is the same as

what we think we're making and that no orders have been missed. It hasn't found an error yet, as our own internal processing is good."

Double bubble

Mr Fleming notes that despite considerable growth forecast in 2018, the company has not had to expand on administration resources overall. A part-time administrator has been hired, with Mr Fleming now able to spend much more

time on the shopfloor instead: "Our turnover should double this year over last, and the resource needed to push those orders through has stayed around the same."

Local support has been excellent, with Mr Fleming stating that the 123insight helpdesk has also been useful: "Here in Northern Ireland we've got the personal touch with Drew who will always answer our call or get back to us. However, the 123insight helpdesk is great as well for