

CASE STUDY

INNOVATIVE FLEXIBLE PACKAGING MANUFACTURER GOES FROM SPREADSHEETS TO SMART FACTORY WITHOUT ADDING ERP

planet together
Production Scheduling Software

PLANNING / SCHEDULING / OPTIMIZATION / ANALYTICS

Bema
INCORPORATED


CLIENT

Bema Incorporated

INDUSTRY

Flexible Packaging Printing and Manufacturing

CUSTOMER PROFILE

 Bema Incorporated has developed the most innovative printing and manufacturing processes in the flexible packaging industry. Bema has key competencies in designing and manufacturing stand-up, zippered, liquid, shaped and spouted pouches. The Bema Transparent Bag Company started in 1957 on the southside of Chicago and celebrated the company's 50th anniversary in 2019.

PLANETTOGETHER PROFILE

PlanetTogether was founded in 2004 as the culmination of decades of academic research at Cornell University. Combined with over 20 years of industry experience, we focus on making manufacturers more successful by applying software that solves production planning and scheduling problems. With our powerful, easy to use, integrated software tools and education, manufacturers can attract and retain customers by delivering faster—and do it more profitably by minimizing resource and inventory costs. PlanetTogether is on a mission to make the planet more productive, one manufacturer at a time.

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THE CHALLENGES

When operations manager Chuck DiPierro was hired by Bema in 2018, since they already knew it was needed, and went out to get someone to help them do it. “There was, and still is, no Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) in place,” DiPierro reflects. “The job tickets were generated by Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.”

Investing big dollars in ERP can be cost-prohibitive and require a complete system overhaul that can catastrophically interrupt the natural flow of business. But The Bema Team knew something had to be done, because the wasted man-hours and capacity were hurting Bema's efficiency, especially in front end processes, getting jobs scheduled and out to the floor. Bema's efficiency and leaving customer service representatives behind the information curve with less visibility to help with customer planning, having to make to customers revealing previously promised

orders were going to be late. DiPierro lays out just how detrimental the process had become for Bema.

“There was literally a spreadsheet schedule for every department. Our top employee who did this work spent 50% of his time doing data entry during the week, and created a final schedule that took a full day on Saturday, every single week for many years.”

The Excel planning meant any changes to Order priorities had to be re-flowed manually through all Operations, all Departments, Raw Materials supply, etc.:

- » No connectivity between cause and effect
- » Manual updates to all departments for any change
- » No visibility for anyone outside their own spreadsheet

It had become a full-time job to compile and maintain Bema's schedule, without doing any actual scheduling.

█ PICKING THE PERFECT PARTNER

Because of his familiarity in the industry, DiPierro had a couple of automatic ideas on familiar software scheduling solutions that could be used to solve Bema's problems. But he realized that he was risking falling into the trap of familiarity, picking the known solution instead of working to find the best solution.

"Our first step was to research as many companies as we could," DiPierro said. "I wanted to do is see if there was a better system out there." A Google search introduced DiPierro to PlanetTogether.

"We narrowed the field down to five or six choices, then down to three," DiPierro remembers. "One was too restrictive; you don't want to run your business the way the software works, but the other way around. The second choice lacked the MRP focus that we were looking for. But PlanetTogether was flexible, extremely strong in MRP, and also had a great Advanced Planning System (APS). What truly set PlanetTogether apart was the ability to get support. They were ridiculously helpful. Every system has constraints and frames to work inside, but in terms of flexibility, PlanetTogether truly met our needs."

█ TOTAL MAKEOVER

In the months since PlanetTogether and Bema joined forces, nothing short of a revolution has happened at the Midwestern speciality company. "When we got the system in place and started training employees in each department to see what it could do, there was some genuine disbelief," DiPierro said. "People could not believe what they were suddenly capable of doing from their computer, and they all have customizable dashboards to focus on just their customers and shipments, everything their work focus is connected to, depending on their role."

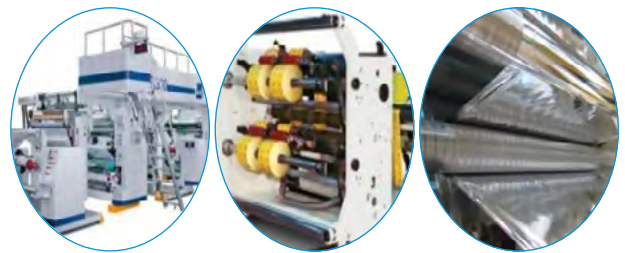
"Our customer service reps are living on it and they can't imagine life without it. They are very sharp, and can be a tough crowd, so I refer to them as the biggest win." "The whole rest of our company over here genuinely loves the capabilities, the connection to Goldratt in our planning now, and the entire experience. Our production meetings, the way we run overtime planning, backward scheduling long running programs, materials planning, and on and on..."

The overhaul now allows Bema to:

- » Maintain efficient scheduling at two different plants
- » Let customer service representatives (CSRs) track orders to see when they'll be complete, when they'll ship, and identify bottlenecks risking late shipments
- » Plan for overtime and holiday work
- » Schedule maintenance events in advance
- » Advise warehouse staff on what raw materials need to be picked and sent to the manufacturing unit
- » Give the purchasing department a wide view of the inventory plan to see what's running low so they can order ahead to avoid running out
- » View revenue projections based on the schedule
- » Plan for standing orders and vendor managed inventory

Bema's Team with their PlanetTogether counterparts in which they go over progress and status on different things that need to be adjusted and created. But DiPietro says PlanetTogether Support often beats him to the punch list. "They have direct access to our network and can log into our systems and servers when they need to get something done," DiPietro says. "Sometimes I'll get to the office in the morning and John has been up in the middle of the night, and he's done something in the system that solves an issue before we can even bring it up."

Investing in an ERP is still on Bema's punch list, but with PlanetTogether, DiPietro is breathing easier -- "Even without an ERP system, we have such an amazing MRP and scheduling system that you'd think we had an ERP already."



DiPietro is thrilled that his team, working with PlanetTogether, has achieved a clear win. "We had a company meeting recently, and the company owner specifically called out PlanetTogether and our team as the as one of the best major software implementations he's ever seen."

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