

Cutting costs in the metal fabrication industry

SYSPRO has been specialising in the fabrication environment for nearly 40 years, with the result that its ERP solution can be fully integrated into fabricators' processes. This article outlines ten ways to help fabricators optimise their production cycles and cut costs.

The metal fabrication industry is facing serious challenges, from volatile commodity prices to shrinking markets, offshore price cutting and higher expectations in terms of quality and speed of delivery. Increasingly, fabricators are having to reassess the way they operate to remain sustainable, by becoming increasingly innovative, tech-savvy, agile, flexible, responsive and customer-centric.

Today, more than ever, the right ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) solution could mean the difference between success and failure of an operation. It can help with planning, execution, control and it can radically improve production efficiency in a manufacturing or fabrication environment.

To get the most out of an ERP solution, it should be one that has been designed, implemented and supported by a company that understands the fabrication business,

one that has the specialist skills to help individual companies to deliver unfailing continuity and consistency throughout the entire value chain, from the initial quote request to the final product delivery.

SYSPRO has nearly 40 years' experience in providing fully integrated ERP solutions that come with a comprehensive set of tools especially suited to help with planning, executing, controlling, streamlining and expanding production processes in fabrication environments. Listed below are ten of the ways SYSPRO's customised solution for fabricators can help users to get the most value from their ERP experience.

1. Optimising the quotation process:

To improve turnaround times and provide a better service to customers, quotations system should provide a single source of 'the truth' for accuracy and review purposes and to enable easy sharing of updated information.

As more and more services are outsourced to benefit from manufacturing and cost efficiencies, costs of material, labour and outside services continue to be an important part of quoting processes. SYSPRO's Quoting and Estimating capabilities allow fabricators to create professional and comprehensive quotations.

A highly flexible interface provides all the information needed to give customers timely quotes and estimates as well as the ability to incorporate vendor-related service costs that can be marked up as a part of any estimate.

2. Streamlining the planning process:

For more efficient operations, SYSPRO Requirements Planning uses projected demand and supply to assist with planning and to create realistic production, purchasing and supply transfer schedules. It also identifies capacity con-

straints and maintains optimal stock holdings in a multi-site and multi-warehouse environment.

3. Synchronise supply with demand:

Particularly for component and material suppliers to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), synchronising supply with customer demand is a key requirement to prevent costly line stoppages in assembly plants. This involves not only automating order processing and other processes in the supply chain, but also executing production plans using LEAN principles.

SYSPRO's Manufacturing Operations Management Solution facilitates the management of the end-to-end manufacturing process. It provides complete manufacturing lifecycle management from planning, scheduling, publishing, collecting, tracking and analysing, to optimise and improve operations.

4. Design and engineering collaboration:

SYSPRO's Product Configurator offers multiple configuration options to customers in a controlled, cost-effective and user-friendly manner to maximise customer service and operational efficiencies.

It enables manufacturers to differentiate their product offerings through the customisation of products to meet customer specifications and it can help reduce configuration errors, while also reducing the involvement of experts in routine transactions.

Import facilities and SYSPRO e.net Solutions facilitate improved electronic collaboration with customers for the creation of customer-specified designs, while the Contact Management System provides a central area for the recording and querying of all communications regarding collaborative activities.

In addition, other product-related data such as technical drawings can be imported and linked to the relevant products in SYSPRO, while photographs, video clips and other multimedia files can be linked and viewed on-demand.

SYSPRO's powerful Engineering Change Control (ECC) features enable the creation of user-defined workflows to control the

product development process and ensure electronic sign-off.

5. Manage inventory:

For improved customer service and profitable management, effective inventory management should be a priority for every manufacturing or distribution business. These businesses need a unified view of inventory, which requires real-time data at each stocking location, whether these are in transit, at the finished goods warehouse, on the factory floor, expected components or raw material from suppliers, and outstanding orders from customers.

SYSPRO provides comprehensive inventory management tools to ensure there is visibility of inventory across the supply chain to meet the demands of the business, helping to eliminate overstocking and tying up of capital.

6. Manage product and part traceability:

To ensure operational efficiencies and to meet the critical compliance requirements of the fabrication industry, SYSPRO provides traceability from material origins through manufacture to final destination.

Lot Traceability and Serial Tracking functionality affords full visibility to the origins, build and sales destination of products, thereby providing the means to easily trace and analyse the source of defects should they occur.

7. Reduce time to market:

Customisable end products, flexibility, speed and accuracy in meeting customer demand are essential to remaining competitive. SYSPRO provides the tools to manage fabrication businesses successfully, ensuring a healthy profit while staying competitive.

8. Customer relationships and service:

Providing the kind of service that builds solid relationships requires that every client-facing person in the company has immediate access to information that helps them to keep track of customers, conduct analyses, and make informed business decisions quickly and confidently. SYSPRO's Contact Management provides all this and more.



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9. Improved electronic collaboration with trading partners:

SYSPRO enhances the ability to harness e-Commerce technologies effectively, giving the potential to transform a business and accelerate commercial success and growth.

10. Linking the supply chain with SYSPRO:

Increasingly, organisations want to connect external devices such as tablets and scanners to their business software. The objectives of integration are to improve information sharing, reduce duplicate data entry and enable data to be stored in one place for consolidated reporting and analysis.

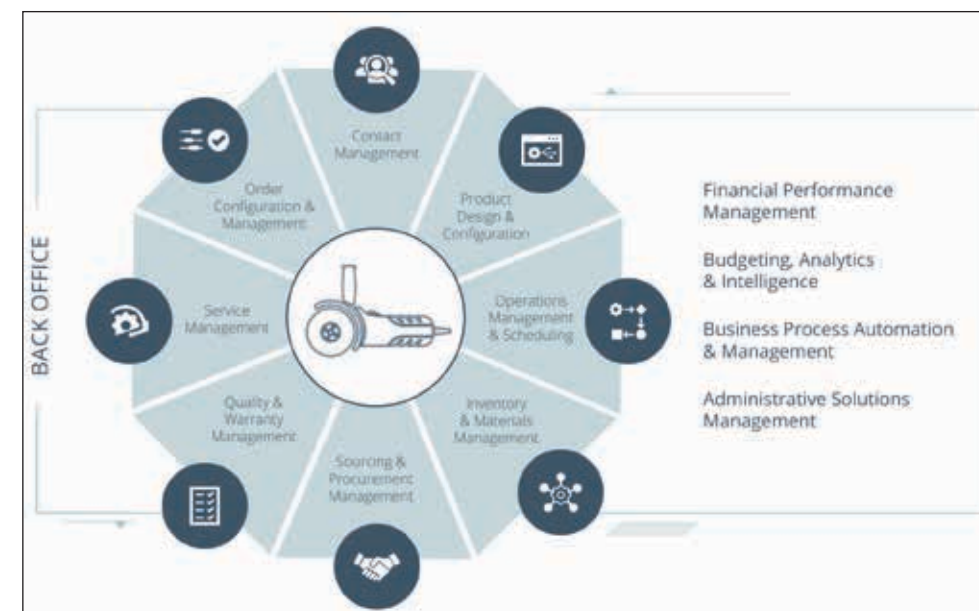
SYSPRO's Integration Framework en-

ables the ERP application to be extended to work with other systems within and beyond the enterprise. It encourages integration with other line-of-business third-party products; information interchange with external devices; access to applications via the web; easier collaboration and information sharing with business partners; and improvements to the user interface.

As evidence of the suitability of this ERP solution, global fabrication companies that have successfully adopted SYSPRO include: Benchmade Knife Company; Metaltech, which reported £200 000 per year in savings after adoption; B&R Enclosures; Hall Longmore, and Zircoa, which reported an increase in top-line revenue of 21% as a direct result of using the solutions. ■



SYSPRO ERP metal fabrication software enables users to manage production costs, product quality, and on-time delivery by automating and integrating business processes and improving management information.



The operational infrastructure of a fabricated metal business.