

EDISON WELDING INSTITUTE



Solution Overview

Edison Welding Institute
Columbus, Ohio
www.ewi.org

Industry

Engineering Research & Design

Scenario

Edison Welding Institute sought improved project control with better analysis capabilities.

Solution

Microsoft Dynamics SL Project Management and Accounting (PMA) provides the company with powerful budget and resource management for projects

Technologies

Microsoft Dynamics – Solomon
Microsoft Project
Microsoft Project Server

Benefits

- A decade of Benefits
- True project control
- Effective resource management
- Continuing Benefits
- Return on Investment

Edison Welding Institute (EWI) is the largest nonprofit, industrially driven engineering organization in North America dedicated to advancing and applying materials joining technology to benefit the manufacturing industry. EWI's 160 staff members provide materials joining assistance, contract research, consulting services and training to member companies representing more than 3,300 plant locations nationwide.

The organization has engineers in all disciplines of materials joining technology who assist manufacturers with welding and joining challenges. Help can range from a simple answer over the phone to a three-year research and development project to develop a more involved solution. EWI is dedicated to providing quality service to ensure quality results and meet or exceed a company's expectations.

A DECADE OF BENEFITS

For more than a decade, EWI benefited from their Microsoft Dynamics SL financial solution. Flexibility and easy customization allows the organization to retrieve the business information they need to make critical decisions.

The Project Management and Accounting (PMA) series provides easy expense and time tracking along with real-time budget data for project analysis, and EWI engineers had used Microsoft Project for managing project schedules and resources. Between October 2002 and October 2003, EWI's project overspends fell from 4.6% to 2.1%, while the number of days between estimated close date and actual close date decreased by 10 days.

Each product has served EWI well, and now, by exploiting the integrated power of Professional Services Automation, the organization is able to have true control over the lifecycle of a project.

TRUE PROJECT CONTROL

"We've had the situation where we've had a good year but we've also had high cost overruns," says EWI IT manager Ron Citterberg. Because PMA stores all of a project's data in one central location while sharing it between Microsoft Dynamics SL and Microsoft Project, decision makers have access to the vital information they need to intervene at an earlier stage in a project and take appropriate action.

Citterberg says that while Project Accounting provides real-time budget data, the manual entry process delayed data reporting of resource management "at least a week." With Professional Services Automation, budget and resource data are both immediate and up to date. He says, "Right now we enter project data by hand into Project Workbench at the end of week, so by using Microsoft Dynamics SL PMA, we're going to eliminate data entry errors—we're going to eliminate data entry altogether."

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Ron Citterberg
IT Manager

We offer solutions to Engineering and Professional Services Firms that help reduce the cost of operations and offer true project control while continuously improving business performance.

Microsoft project management and accounting solutions can help managers and staff structure and run projects with optimal cost-efficiency and profitability. With these innovative software tools, they can track the actual expenses of labor, materials, and other costs more easily. The solutions also allow them to be constantly aware of changes in key values so they can take needed action promptly.

The manual process took an entire week itself, was fraught with error, and made it difficult to predict backlog and future business, according to Elaine Eggenspiller, technical scheduler for EWI. With the integration, EWI's program managers see data at the project task level immediately after the week's work hours were approved, improving the tracking of progress on projects.

Effective Resource Management

Improved resource management gives EWI a more realistic view of project timetables. “Since we draw from just one resource pool, we can be more realistic about when we get jobs done,” says Ron Fowler, database and applications developer. “We’ll be able to see that if someone is working on two other projects, then we may need to push the deadline out on a third.”

This benefits EWI engineers by setting more appropriate expectations for each project. The increased accessibility to web-based applications allowed its globally dispersed technical staff to gain 24-hour access to scheduled project work. And an eight-week summary report on availability tightened resource management.

According to Fowler, PMA also takes advantage of the task-level management within Microsoft Project to extend the budgeting capabilities of Project Accounting.

Benefits Continue After a Project Ends

PMA also provides the necessary information needed to analyze projects upon completion. “We’ll see what went right and what didn’t go right so we can eventually improve our process here,” says Citterberg. By adding efficiencies to the project management process, EWI will complete projects more quickly while saving money at the same time.

Return on Investment

Microsoft Dynamics Professional Services Automation leverages the features of both Project Accounting and Microsoft Project to allow EWI more cost and resource control over projects than ever before. Benefits include:

Real-Time Data—Project managers can view up-to-the-minute budget and resource information.

Eliminated Data Entry—Data flows seamlessly in PMA, eliminating the need for manual entry and reducing the chance for errors.

Web-Enabled—Engineers enter time and expense information and have the ability to view project reports online.

E-mail Functions—Professional Services Automation easily e-mails assignments to other engineers.

Enhanced Analysis—Engineers can compare estimated hours per individual to actual hours.