

Marion Steel

AXIS™ ERP

The Key to Customer Service and Business Efficiency at Marion Steel



AXIOM® Helps Mini-mill Streamline Business Processes with Integrated Applications and Real-time Information

Profile

Marion Steel Company is a low-cost producer of rebar, merchant bar quality angles, flats and rounds. In addition to merchant products, Marion Steel has earned the reputation of being 'America's Signpost Leader', manufacturing a complete line of Federal Highway Administration approved u-channel sign support and delineation products produced from new billet steel. A mini-mill located in central Ohio, Marion Steel is focused on providing quality steel and service, using 100 percent recycled steel scrap.

Challenge

Prior to implementing the AXIS solution, Marion Steel was running a hodge-podge of order entry, inventory, accounting and other business applications, all of them distributed among un-networked PCs. Being in a commodity business, Marion Steel executives knew they needed to be able to conduct every facet of their operations without wasted motion or delayed information, and most importantly, without frustrated customers. Led by Marion Steel CFO, Kathy Ament, the company decided it was time to move to an integrated business system that would improve data collection and processing throughout the company's operations to enhance customer service.

Ament and others recognized, however, that they couldn't afford to force-fit a typical discrete or a process ERP package into a highly specialized environment like metals manufacturing. They knew they needed software with a unique set of capabilities to support their unique production processes, information requirements, and business practices.



ROI at a Glance:

The implementation of AXIOM ERP has helped Hammond, Ind.-based Jupiter Aluminum, a producer of high-quality mill-finish and painted aluminum coil, achieve the following returns on investment:

- Sales people now have access to accurate, realtime status of inventory and production.
- Administrative staff requirements reduced 17 percent.
- Productivity greatly improved through bar code data collection and automated generation of test results and certifications.



Why AXIS?

With its specialized needs and a desire to remain on top of its game, Marion Steel was thorough in its search for the right ERP package.

“It took considerable time to find and review the few software packages tailored to the metals industry,” says Ament.

“After looking at the costs and features offered by the different vendors, we could see that the AXIS solution came the closest to providing what we needed in order to achieve greater efficiency. AXIOM has metal-specific capabilities that 99 percent of applications don’t have, one of the most important being the ability to track products at the bundle-ID level along with their associated heat, chemistry, and quality attributes.” Marion Steel ultimately chose the AXIOM Enterprise Resource Management System because of its fit to their business, and because the AXIS people really understood the challenges and needs of their business. The fact that there was an active community of similar metals companies using AXIOM confirmed that it was the right choice.

Results

Marion Steel quickly replaced their fragmented infrastructure with the integrated AXIOM solution. AXIOM’s functionality, industry-specific capabilities, and flexibility meant that Marion Steel did not need to make any significant changes to either the software or their business practices. AXIOM has brought the manufacturer and its information together in a way that is making it a stronger competitor through increased productivity and improved customer service.

“A key goal was to keep close track of production data so that sales would always know what’s available,” remembers Ament. “AXIOM has allowed us to introduce bar coding that assigns a unique ID for each bundle of steel. That helps us track it, assign it to particular trucks and customers, and quickly generate shipping documents and invoices.”

Bar coding, combined with integrated inventory and order entry, allows Marion Steel to collect and work with real-time data. “Now we gather all our information in one business system,” says Ament. “We can give customers much more accurate order status information, as well as mill test reports that certify each batch of steel’s chemical and physical properties.”

The company’s increased level of business process integration and automation has allowed it to reduce what was a 12-person administrative staff by two people.

“We’ve achieved significant savings and efficiencies with AXIOM. There’s much less manual paperwork and our customers can attest that the service side of our business has greatly improved. If you can eliminate those kinds of costs, you have a system that’s certainly paying for itself.”

— *Kathy Ament*
Chief Financial Officer
Marion Steel

Marion Steel is also happy with AXIOM's Progress-based software architecture. "AXIOM is a sophisticated and powerful system that's also very flexible and easy to use. For instance, it lets us add new data fields for individual products or customers to handle special information requirements without needing to call MIS. And I'm able to generate ad hoc reports much more easily with the Progress tools that were provided with AXIOM," says Ament.

MIS Manager Geof Ridenour, who worked for two other steel companies before coming to Marion Steel, adds: "I've worked with Oracle and other databases, but AXIOM and Progress make it much easier to do things like tailor the system or produce new reports."

"We've achieved significant savings and efficiencies with AXIOM," summarizes Ament. "There's much less manual paperwork and our customers can attest that the service side of our business has greatly improved. If you can eliminate those kinds of costs, you have a system that's certainly paying for itself."

About Consona ERP

Consona Corporation is a worldwide leader in providing customer relationship management (CRM) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) software and services for companies of all sizes. Consona serves more than 4,500 customers worldwide and across a variety of industries.

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