



Excellence in production control and administration for manufacturing businesses

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SOFTWARE INVESTMENT AND COLLABORATION BRINGS ALL ROUND REWARDS FOR MACH-TECH

Machining Technology (Mach-Tech) Ltd has more than doubled its turnover in the last couple of years and credits the continued application of PSL Datatrack production control software for helping to manage the growth of its customer base and the significantly higher number of quotations and orders now being processed on a daily basis. 2020 marked Mach-Tech's 10th year of using the system and PSL Datatrack has worked closely with them in that time to develop additional functionality of key modules of the software, which has been of great mutual benefit.

Based in Oxfordshire, Mach-Tech's high precision CNC engineering services are utilised by many different customers developing technology for nuclear, scientific and space satellite applications as well as for motor racing, fusion energy and general engineering. Utilising a range of metals, exotic materials and plastics, components are produced in a range of sizes and tolerances in small and medium batch sizes as well as one-off assemblies.

Since its investment in PSL Datatrack, Mach-Tech has continually added new modules whilst at the same time investing in the latest CNC three, four and five axis machine tools. Extensive use is made of offline programming, with machines fully networked and equipped with lasers, probes and cameras for lights out manufacturing. Reinvestment in this technology has been core to the company's growth.

PSL Datatrack is fully integrated with Mach-Tech's manufacturing capabilities. The system schedules and tracks every item, from material sourcing through all machining, external and inspection processes up to delivery and final invoice. This ensures complete product traceability, adherence to customer specifications and the ability to supply essential certificates of conformity, material certifications and traceability reports. It also helps to ensure maximum productivity, the highest level of customer service and achievement of essential Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).



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Mach-Tech has expanded its use of PSL Datatrack to take close control of component stocks, the allocation of materials and cost centre processes as well as purchasing. Careful management of suppliers ensures the availability of all supplied materials and services to complete scheduled orders on time.



Shop Floor Data Collection (SFDC) and Process Layouts have provided essential feedback on machine capacity and work in progress, whilst visual Status Board displays have given the shop floor real time information on the status of any order. At management level, PSL Datatrack has been linked to the company's accounts system with invoicing, credit notes and purchase invoicing all handled.

Having used PSL Datatrack for many years, Mach-Tech's understanding of its functionality has grown and the experienced staff members responsible for using the system have learned how to get more out of it. "With document management, we now keep life time records of every customer and for every order or job that we have completed. This allows us to search historic records on absolutely everything appertaining to a specific customer order, from suppliers and materials right through to all of our design and production procedures, quality control and deliveries. This traceability is essential to so many of our customers," comments Simon Fisher, Mach-Tech's Customer Accounts Manager.

As a small subcontract precision engineering company, everyone's input is important to the success of Mach-Tech. The management team responsible for running PSL Datatrack looks continually at how to maximise the benefits of the investments made over the last ten years.

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With increased business levels, Mach-Tech wanted to address the critical areas of raising quotations and works orders more effectively. One of the most time consuming tasks for many subcontract engineering companies is manually and repeatedly entering information into spreadsheets. Mach-Tech solved this problem with its initial investment in PSL Datatrack but wanted to take this to another level and investigate how the system could be enhanced to further increase efficiency.

So in 2018, Mach-Tech approached the PSL Datatrack development team. "We put our ideas to PSL on how to customise the Quotations and Works Order modules to our needs. They were very responsive to our ideas and after a period of close collaboration our requirements were met," says Simon.

Mach-Tech's quotations have varying degrees of complexity depending on the quantities involved and the different machining and finishing processes that may be required. A quotation may include over 100 different items and was taking as long as four days to turn around. With the improvements that have been made to the software, this has halved.

Once a firm order had been received for a multitude of different components, multiple works orders had to be raised by matching against the relevant quotations. "We wanted to speed this up as much as possible. PSL Datatrack examined our requirements and were able to develop a new utility for the module that facilitates much quicker matching to quotations, alongside details such as due date, to create the necessary works orders. It could previously take us hours to raise the works orders for 100 different components but this can now be completed in less than a minute," continues Simon.

From PSL Datatrack's viewpoint, these functionality improvements could then be offered to all customers as part of the company's next version upgrade release. "We actively encourage our customers to suggest enhancements to PSL Datatrack to suit their unique requirements. Our customer Wishlist system is very important in the ongoing development of our software and Mach-Tech make an important contribution to this," comments Geoff Gartland, Managing Director.

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Mach-Tech has further improved its efficiency recently through the addition of the Time And Attendance module, which gives them insight into hours worked and other data to decide which productivity improvements could be made.

“PSL Datatrack gives us complete control over the way our production process is managed. It gives our customers full traceability and is essential to maintaining our own ISO 9001:2015 accreditation. Whilst 2020 was a challenging year, there remain opportunities and we will continue to look to develop the functionality of the software going forward as it remains a crucial element of our business,” concludes Simon.

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