



Goal:

- Implement a system that domain experts, not just IT, could maintain
- Capture the intellectual capital of Dayton Progress' product experts
- Make Dayton Progress "the easiest company to do business with"

Challenge:

- Replace a custom-designed software system that had been in use for over 30 years
- Integrate with Dayton Progress' ERP system
- Reduce system maintenance and streamline the order-entry process

Solution:

Cincom Acquire™
Guided Selling and Product Configurator Software

Key results:

- 50% time reduction in time-standards programming
- 30 year capture of intellectual capital and system data
- 60% reduction in order-to-shop processing time
- Reductions in inventory, optimized to customer demand
- Payback of less than 2 years of software and services from Cincom; derived from efficiencies in maintenance, order entry, customer service, and process engineering

Profile in Success: **Dayton Progress**

60% reduction in order-to-shop processing time!



Situation

When you're the worldwide industry leader in the production of catalog and special punches, punch blanks, and other metal stamping tools, you could say your job is on the line each and every day. Providing innovations and techniques that improve the performance and productivity of stamping operations in customer plants, Dayton Progress Corporation, a subsidiary of Federal Signal Corporation, accepts a high volume of order line items per day from around the world, with most being engineer-to-order (ETO). In addition, Dayton Progress maintains renowned quality standards, holds the tightest of tolerances, and offers their customers delivery schedules that are as short as one day.

Hoping to continue their long-standing track record for premiere customer service, market-leading quality, and rapid delivery – while positioning themselves for further growth – Dayton Progress turned to Cincom to replace their aging order processing system. Dayton Progress' Vice President of Finance and the company's project team reveal how Cincom is helping them to be proactive today, while bringing them continued value for years to come.

Proactive change in a company that knows its business

Q & A with Randy Wissinger, Vice-President of Finance, Dayton Progress

As the Vice-President of Finance, what were your indications that Dayton Progress needed to consider doing things differently surrounding your quote-to-order process?

The most compelling driver was what we call "catalog" products. In effect, all of our products are completely custom, but the company developed an alphanumeric coding system that allows customers to specify a product by utilizing a smart part number. This ordering process was supported by custom-designed software that had its origination over 30 years ago. As we moved to better serve our customers, by expanding the number of products available under this methodology, the complexity of system maintenance, product additions and internal skill sets drove us to look for a more standardized platform on which to develop. Additionally, Dayton Progress is a global corporation and we use this same methodology worldwide. However, we have vastly different levels of software sophistication in each subsidiary. Our desire was to create one global software tool that would standardize our ability to serve our customers around the world.

What are the overall business goals that this initiative will address?

Number one is ease of maintenance. Number two is globalization. Number three is the ability to interact with our customers over the internet. Number four is improved internal operations, due to increased flexibility of the software product.

What were your concerns in replacing a system that had served Dayton Progress well for many years?

The major concern was duplicating over 30 years of accumulated refinement that is contained in the current application. However, the company is blessed with extremely talented individuals who have most of the knowledge in their heads, so our principal challenge was being able to put that knowledge into a computer application.

How did Cincom technology stand out during your selection process?

We began the software selection process by looking for ERP systems that had a configurator. After a short amount of time, we changed our focus to searching for a configurator product, with the ERP system being a secondary consideration. Cincom was one of a very few products that could even meet our criteria and is, by far, the most flexible and intuitive product we saw. The graphical method of programming allowed our most knowledgeable internal resources to work with the product without the prerequisite of a heavy programming background.

Describe the business value and Return-On-Investment (ROI) you have experienced (or expect to experience) from using Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator software.

At this point in time (mid-development), we anticipate that all of our business goals (listed above) will be met. The primary value we have received to date is to put the configuration control into the hands of product specialists, not programmers. This allows for direct knowledge input into the system, eliminating reliance on a series of handoffs to get changes into the system. The ultimate value will be to better serve our global customers through more efficient interaction with them, quicker internal response and delivering the desired product to the customer in the least amount of time possible. We want to expand our capability to be the easiest company to do business with. This product allows us to move further down that path.



How has Cincom helped you streamline your business?

The current benefits anticipated will allow an increased ability to translate the customer's product desires to the shop floor more effectively and produce and deliver the product correctly the first time and in the least amount of time. Longer term, we plan to compress and simplify the absolute amount of time from customer product specification to delivery through utilization of this (and other) tools.

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– Randy Wissinger
Vice-President of Finance, Dayton Progress

Cincom believes that we are the exception in the market today when it comes to lengthy implementation times and high implementation costs. What are your impressions?

We examined more than a dozen configuration products and it is more than fair to say that Cincom's approach is the exception and is the preferable approach. The amount of consultant time is minuscule relative to the internal time being spent. The product allows the people most familiar with the desired results to work effectively on the design and implementation, without explaining everything to a third-party consultant. The knowledge transfer about the product is relatively short and the internal learning curve is steep, allowing individuals to see positive results quickly. We have also found Cincom to be one of the most accommodating IT product providers we have worked with. Lastly, we believe we have just scratched the surface of what the Cincom product is capable of. Our first priority is to bring the finished configurator online. After that, we intend to examine what other benefits we can receive from the product.

What advice would you give to other companies that are considering the same type of initiative?

Create a detailed functional requirement for the software. Examine all appropriate products in the marketplace. Make sure the critical features are fully understood through a demo. Understand what is required for the software product to actually work. Be sure you have the internal skill sets that can be committed to the project.



Executing a well-conceived plan

Q & A with Dayton Progress' project team

L-R: Blaine Spencer, Karen Shannon, Kevin Elam, Bob Morton

project team and roles (as pictured):

Blaine Spencer – Project Engineer
Roles: Project Leader

Karen Shannon – Catalog Products Specialist
Roles: Inventory and Manufacturing Process Specialist

Kevin Elam – Manufacturing Engineer
Roles: Time Standards and Manufacturing Process Specialist

Robert Morton – Methods Engineer
Roles: Product Engineering and Manufacturing Process Specialist



Describe what Dayton Progress set out to do with Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator technology.

Our project has two primary phases. In the first phase, we hope to simply make sure that our internal processes can continue. Our current computer system is simply not capable of serving our needs in a timely and effective manner. The way logic and rules were programmed into it was fairly manageable 30 years ago when the system was set up and our product offering and manufacturing options were relatively limited. Like many companies, our objective is growth and along with our success, programming demands on the system have exceeded our capabilities. Phase one will include an order-entry system that validates the millions of ordered item combinations possible, an inventory selection process that optimizes inventory usage, and a manufacturing routing application that selects required operations from our complex manufacturing process to convert inventory blanks into customer-ordered parts.

In phase two, we will extend the order-entry application developed in phase one to allow our supply chain partners to enter orders directly into our system over the internet.

We will also take advantage of Cincom technology and its flexibility as a knowledge-based application, to create new internal and customer service applications and to provide our customers with the most efficient and effective services in the industry.

Inventory and process control

Cincom's solution will help us optimize our inventory control and our manufacturing processes, through reduced frequency of invalid orders, efficiency improvements in inventory usage, and reduced time spent manually substituting, changing, and creating routings for individual items.

Methods engineering

Socrates® will allow us to automate processing of a wider range of items typically considered specials today. This ability to standardize more products will reduce our customer's lead time on some products that previously required special handling by a methods engineer.

What areas of your business has the solution impacted?

Marketing and customer service

Through the new customer interface, changes and additions to product offerings can be made significantly faster and more easily. Also, customers will receive the most up-to-date, consistent information about our products and services.

Engineering

By centralizing product tolerances and information, one integrated solution captures and maintains everything we need to manage our product offerings and manufacturing specifications.

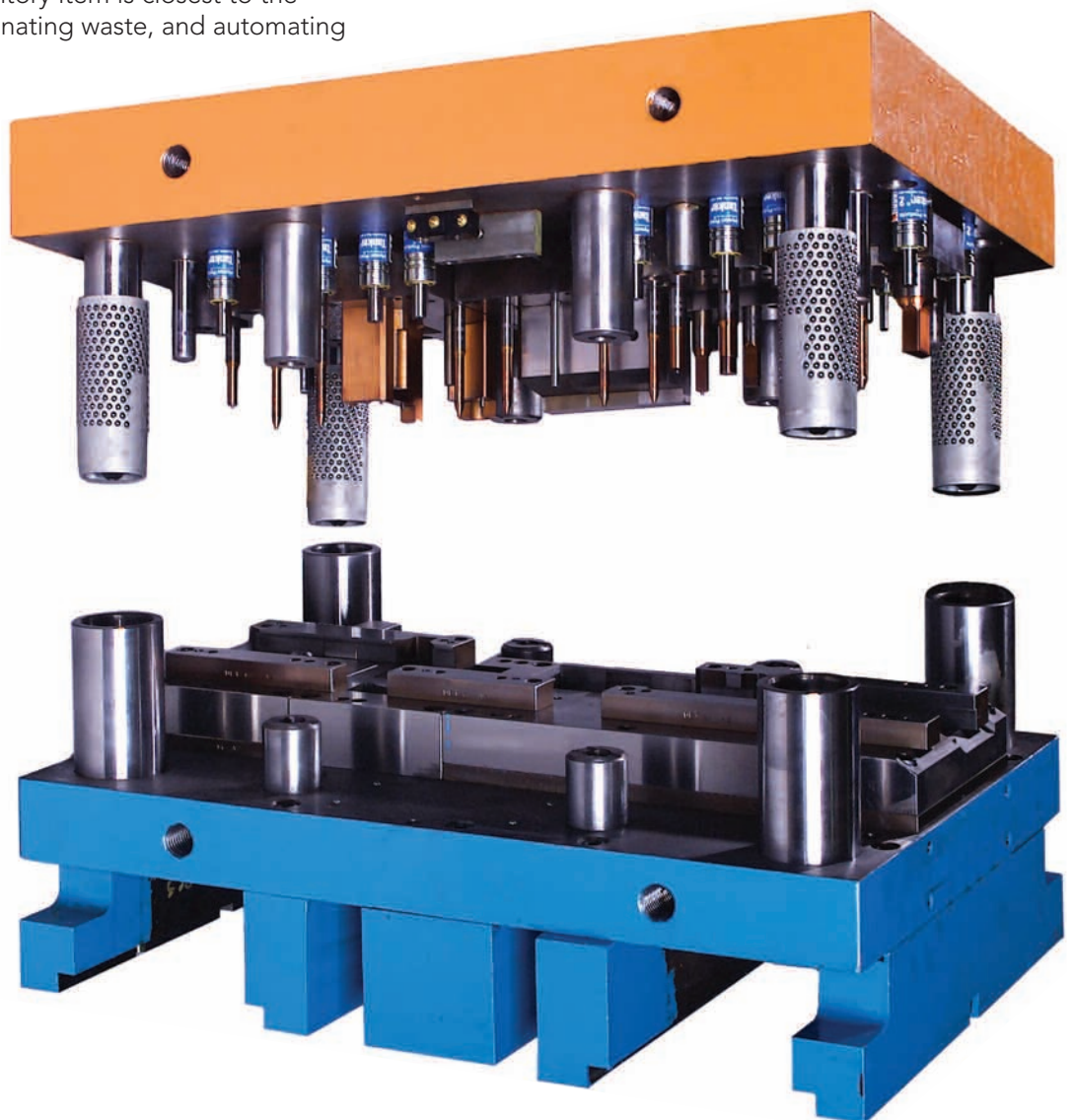
Inventory and process control

The most immediate impacts internally will be more accurate and logical inventory selection, standards applications, and routings. With Cincom's solution, we will be able to instantly compare parts that are ordered to all of the parts available in inventory. This will allow us to quickly determine what inventory item is closest to the finished part required – eliminating waste, and automating this complex process.

Methods engineering

The biggest influence we see Cincom's solution having is in manufacturing. In the past 50 years, we have managed to accumulate over 800,000 order processing records – which include a routing number and "Smart Part Number" for every conceivable ordered part. Only one to two people maintain these records, which can take anywhere from 10 minutes to possibly days or weeks, depending on the number of records that need to be changed.

Cincom's solution will enable us to base our routings, Smart Part Numbers, and time standards on the actual attributes of the part. By making manufacturing decisions based on rules and knowledge managed in Cincom's solution rather than records that represent the rules and knowledge, we will eliminate the 800,000 records, make maintenance dramatically easier, and produce more accurate and consistent manufacturing decisions.



As a team tasked with using the Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator, please share your impressions of its capabilities?

We have yet to identify anything we cannot do with Cincom's solution. If a process or decision can be rationally and consistently defined, we can apply the rules and logic in the Cincom solution to make it happen. The flexibility of Cincom's solution allows us to utilize knowledge-based reasoning in making decisions over a wide range of areas.



Flexibility and ease-of-use

Based on what we saw during our buying process, Cincom's solution provides the best environment for programming. The graphical interface and object-oriented programming style of the solution expert environment has been fantastic. The variety of methods available to retrieve and output information between different computer programs makes the Cincom solution very adaptable.

Rapid, intuitive development

From a developer and maintenance standpoint, greater control is achieved through the use of locally named objects inherent to our processes. Another important feature is achieved through the use of tree structures. This flowchart-like programming reduces code and provides a visual roadmap, making decision flow with the architecture easy to recognize and follow. Cincom's solution stood out above many tools we considered, which typically constrained the developer to predetermined naming conventions and programming rules with code. It also allows several opportunities to enter notes and reminders to describe what a programming object or piece of code does or how a process works to make maintenance easier for the original designer or, more importantly, a new addition to the team.

"We believe Cincom is a committed organization, whose people have and will continue to make our project successful."

– Blaine Spencer
Project Leader, Dayton Progress

Dramatically reduced maintenance

Our current system uses the catalog part number to pick one of over 800,000 processing records to determine the required manufacturing process, which, as you can imagine, requires intensive maintenance. Cincom's solution will allow us to have as few as two knowledge-based, graphical flowcharts to accomplish this.

How has Cincom helped you become and continue to be successful?

To get us started, Cincom worked with our team to develop the basic design for our application and focused on making sure that we knew how to use the solution's expert environment. That way, the people at Dayton Progress who have the required company knowledge can perform the programming and maintain the system themselves. It will make us much more agile in the future when product or process changes or additions are required, without continued consultant costs to support our needs.

The Cincom consultants have also exceeded our expectations, providing outstanding service and ability to quickly grasp our environment and business needs. We believe Cincom is a committed organization, whose people have made and will continue to make our project successful.



For 40 years, Cincom has empowered thousands of clients worldwide to transform their businesses and outperform the competition by providing ways to increase revenue, control cost, minimize risk and achieve rapid ROI. Cincom serves clients on six continents including American Power Conversion, Air Products, BMW, Boeing, Ericsson, Rolls-Royce, Rockwell Automation, and Siemens.

For more information and additional resources, contact Cincom at 1-800-224-6266 (USA only) send an e-mail to acquire@cincom.com, or visit the company's website at www.cincomacquire.com.

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