



Decorated Products

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Company Facts

- Location: Westfield, MA.
- Industry: Metal Nameplates & Labels
- Employees: 42

"Decorated is a much leaner company than we were several years ago. We are continually striving to reduce waste, improve operations, and be more flexible to better serve our customers."

Jeff Glaze, Owner/President | Decorated Products

Decorated Products, a Westfield, Massachusetts-based maker of metal identification labels, decals, and roll labels, was started in 1950 by the father of the current president/owner, Jeff Glaze. As a family owned and operated business, Decorated embodies the traditional focus on customer service and the personal touch that have made the company an undisputed leader in its industry. But these traditional values have not stood in the way of innovation and efficiency.

"Decorated is a much leaner company than we were several years ago," Glaze says. "We are continually striving to reduce waste, improve operations, and be more flexible to better serve our customers." That journey has taken the company through Kaizen (starting in 1988), 6-Sigma, Deming's 14 steps, and various Lean initiatives to ISO 14000 compliance, ISO 9001:2000 and ISO/TS 16949:2002 registrations, and qualification as a Tier 1 vendor to the automotive industry. Epicor's manufacturing software solution has been a key part of those Lean efforts.

"Epicor is flexible enough to support what we have done in our Lean transformation," Glaze says. As an example, he points to some of the changes in inventory management: "We standardized part numbering and reduced raw material inventory from 200 parts to about 60. We changed the way we purchase so that now 80% of our materials are on consignment – time phased to coordinate with our raw material needs. Epicor's flexibility has fully supported this effort to the point where we trigger vendor billing for these materials when we open the box."

Success Highlights

Challenges and Opportunities

- Following a failed implementation, Decorated Products needed a fresh start with a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution robust enough to support the company's growth and its drive toward Lean efficiencies

Epicor Solution and Services

- Epicor Manufacturing

Benefits

- Increased inventory turns from less than two to over 50
- Reduced customer lead time from four weeks to four days
- Reduced finished goods inventory, freed up warehouse space

Decorated has cut manufacturing lead-time from four weeks to four days. "We eliminated operations, and got better at the ones that remain," he says. "Real-time reporting and analysis in Epicor are key, enabling us to react much faster to customer requests and keep closer track of inventory and production activities." On some custom products, Decorated offers 24 hour turn-around by having the necessary materials on-hand. Nevertheless, they now maintain an average of only five days of materials on-hand at any time. This is a dramatic decrease from before when the company materials inventory averaged less than two turns (six to twelve months supply).

Increased Visibility, Visible Results

Before Epicor, Decorated was unable to track finished goods with any level of accuracy. "With Epicor, we can track value by warehouse using different valuation techniques for different kinds of inventory. That has helped us to reduce inventory and waste," Glaze says. "We used to have to walk out to the warehouse to check on what we had. That took a lot of time and effort. We don't need to do that any more." The warehousing efficiencies have also reduced the amount of space needed for storage. Decorated also instituted a numbered bin system so they know right where everything is and can get to it faster.

While the company has chosen not to adopt the order-less flow style of production seen in many Lean plants, they benefit from the ability to link sub- assemblies in the system to final products and customer orders using a type of electronic kanban. Since some of the subassemblies can be used in many end products, this visibility helps keep things in synch, avoiding shortages and unpleasant surprises.

Customer service improvements include the use of the Epicor product configurator to quickly and reliably capture customer requirements and prevent problems on the plant floor that can delay shipment and impact quality. "The configurator guides the customer rep through the specification process and helps avoid mistakes," Glaze says.

Part of any Lean effort must be focused on keeping the equipment in good working order to reduce break-downs and schedule disruptions. Decorated has an aggressive predictive and preventive maintenance program in place using Epicor labor tracking to measure equipment usage and minutes of down-time.

Customer Appreciation

The company's accomplishments are evident through the inventory reductions, lead-time improvements, and high level of customer satisfaction. Major customer have recognized Decorated by bestowing single vendor status (Parker Hannifin, Cummins Engine), and through collaboration efforts such as the partnership with Black & Decker where Decorated worked with the design team during the design phase for a complete re-working of the high-end DeWalt tool product line.

About Epicor

Epicor Software Corporation is a global leader delivering business software solutions to the manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service industries. With more than 40 years of experience, Epicor has more than 20,000 customers in over 150 countries. Epicor solutions enable companies to drive increased efficiency and improve profitability. With a history of innovation, industry expertise, and passion for excellence, Epicor inspires customers to build lasting competitive advantage. Epicor provides the single point of accountability that local, regional, and global businesses demand. For more information, visit www.epicor.com.



Contact us for more information on Epicor Products and Services

+1.800.999.6995 info@epicor.com www.epicor.com

Corporate Office
804 Las Cimas Parkway
Austin, TX 78746
USA
Toll Free: +1.888.448.2636
Direct: +1.512.328.2300
Fax: +1.512.278.5590

Latin America and Caribbean
Blvd. Antonio L. Rodriguez #1882 Int. 104
Plaza Central, Col. Santa Maria
Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, CP 64650
Mexico
Phone: +52.81.1551.7100
Fax: +52.81.1551.7117

Europe, Middle East and Africa
No. 1 The Arena
Downshire Way
Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1PU
United Kingdom
Phone: +44.1344.468468
Fax: +44.1344.468010

Asia
238A Thomson Road #23-06
Novena Square Tower A
Singapore 307684
Singapore
Phone: +65.6333.8121
Fax: +65.6333.8131

Australia and New Zealand
Suite 2 Level 8,
100 Pacific Highway
North Sydney, NSW 2060
Australia
Phone: +61.2.9927.6200
Fax: +61.2.9927.6298

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