

FROM HAND WRITTEN TO DATA DRIVEN

Steel Fabricator Transforms Its Maintenance Operation with **MPulse**

Company Bio

Express Metal Fabricators, LLC, St. George Steel Division, is an industrial steel fabrication shop located in southern Utah. Since 1969, the company has fabricated structural steel buildings, ductwork, conveyors, stacks, walkways, bridges, hoppers and pipes as well as other steel fabrication products for their mining and industrial customers. Roughly 120 employees serve clients that include Chevron Texaco, Exxon Corporation USA, Foster Wheeler, Irwin Industries, Kennecott Copper, Kerr McGee Chemical, Monsanto, and Technip USA. Another 40 people work in the company's Murray, Utah, office.

In the St. George location, eight staff members are responsible for maintaining the operation's cranes, manlifts, welding machines, trailers, vehicles and tools. St. George Steel has an annual sales volume of \$25 to \$30 million each year and produces an average of 700 tons of fabrication work per month.



Company Profile

Industry: Industrial Steel Fabrication

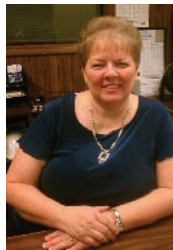
Employees: 160

Years in Business: 44

Annual Revenue: \$25-\$30 million

Monthly Production: 700 tons

Business Challenge



St. George Steel originally purchased its first MPulse computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) solution in 1998, but the software fell into disuse over time. The company explored offerings from other software vendors before deciding to purchase an upgrade to their MPulse software in 2009. They planned to use the upgraded MPulse software to track inventory, as well as provide a history of work order reports, purchase requisitions, and service repairs. But even after the upgrade was implemented, the maintenance staff wasn't using the software to its full potential.

When Becky Newman started with the company in 2012, she quickly realized they could do so much more with MPulse CMMS software. Becky had formerly worked as a school teacher, and this position was her first in the maintenance field. One of her first assignments was getting the maintenance team up and running with their CMMS system. With a limited amount of training, Becky set out to learn as much as she could about MPulse and how it could make her employer more efficient.

Solution

In 2009, St. George upgraded to MPulse WorkFlow Edition v7.0, equivalent to today's MPulse Bronze Edition. This robust, entry-level version of MPulse includes Work Order Management, Basic Inventory, and Preventive Maintenance Scheduling & Tracking, as well as the customizable Maintenance Advisor Dashboard. St. George added Advanced Inventory Control and Purchase Requisitioning to enhance their inventory management capabilities. They also opted for worry-free MPulse professional application hosting in the cloud, a service that MPulse offers free for all customers who participate in the MPulse Maintenance and Support Program (MSP).



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**Reduce number
of Repair Part
Purchase Orders
by 50%**



**Decrease time
for Equipment
Inventory by 80%**



**Reduce overall
Purchasing Costs
by 50%**

Becky started her quest to learn about MPulse by taking advantage of the personal service available from MPulse's tech support team. "The support team is absolutely wonderful there," she said. "They showed me a few things, and I was up and running."

MPulse's online video tutorials, the "MPulse Nuggets" training series by CBT Nuggets, also were a big help. "I have watched about 5 or 6 videos so far and it took me very little time to implement the things I learned," Becky said. "I would watch the video and then try it for myself. If I didn't get it right, I could go back and review the video again. I actually keep a list of the video topics I want to learn more about on my desk."

Becky started by developing a tracking system so the maintenance crew could identify the 500 equipment items, 42 trailers and numerous tools that were spread out among 12 building areas. This tracking system is the core of St. George Steel's CMMS software implementation. With this information, Becky began to expand the way the company used MPulse Maintenance Software in their daily operations.

Benefits

St. George experienced a wide range of benefits from its MPulse solution, from faster inventory counts to improved tracking of purchase requisitions. In a relatively short amount of time, the company has transformed its maintenance operations from pencil and paper to an automated database full of vital information that saves the company both time and money.

Faster Asset Inventory Counts

Now the St. George Steel maintenance staff has a list of the equipment and where it should be located, enabling them to identify what's not in use or even find equipment they may have forgotten about. "Equipment can be lost really easily without a list to check it by," Becky said. "We have a lot of employees, welders, who grab what they need, and some of it can walk off without it being checked back in. Now it's easy to do an inventory on what we have and where it should be."

Becky estimates the time to do equipment inventory has been reduced by approximately 80% since implementing the MPulse system. "I can now produce a report of our inventory by selected categories for our guys to check up on weekly," she explained. "By checking our inventory on a rotational basis, we are able to get all equipment reviewed quarterly and maintenance repairs scheduled as needed."

Better Purchasing Decisions

Thanks to the MPulse training videos, Becky also has taught herself how to run reports. Now she has data that the managers can use to make key purchasing decisions.

"We can determine our repair costs, and decide if it's better to keep repairing it or just purchase another one," she said. "They wanted to know the history of a forklift, so they could see how much they had spent over the past couple of years. We had \$30,000 in repair and labor; that's an awful lot – we could have bought another one." That one discovery could have paid for MPulse many times over.

"When you use pencil and paper, it takes hours. It takes a lot of time to get a result, where it only takes minutes in software like MPulse."



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Improved Purchase Requisition Tracking

Another big impact was requisitions. Becky began tracking purchase requisitions and invoices in MPulse, as well as inputting vendor contact information. This electronic paper trail made it much simpler to reconcile the accounts and cut down on duplicate or lost orders.

"Our maintenance supervisor told me the system has cut the purchasing requisitions down by almost half because he can track them," she said. "We now use the extra money to purchase new equipment and repair existing equipment."

Shifting from Reactive to Proactive

Becky sees the benefits of the MPulse solution compounding as she continues to expand its use at St. George Steel. She's already tracking maintenance and repair history, and beginning to explore preventive maintenance functionality. "The guys come in and ask me, 'When's the last time I changed the oil on this vehicle?' I know MPulse can run a preventive maintenance report, and I'm hoping to implement that sometime soon."

As part of her preventive maintenance processes, Becky plans to track vehicle parts inventory, so the company can buy frequently used parts in bulk, yet still know exactly what's sitting on the shelf and what needs to be restocked. "We need to be able to track that, or we are wasting money just purchasing all the time," she said.

From Hand Written to Data Driven

In just one year, MPulse CMMS software has transformed how St. George Steel's maintenance team works, making the company more efficient and Becky more effective at her job. "When you use pencil and paper, it takes hours," she explained. "It takes a lot of time to get a result, where it only takes minutes in software like MPulse. We've taken it from pencil and paper to an automated database that can give me the information in less time."

"We now use the extra money to purchase new equipment and repair existing equipment."



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