Sms technologies

Company: MAPICSCustomer: SMS TechnologiesSubmitted by: HarvardPRWhen listening to the enthusiasm of the management team at UK-based SMS Technologies, a leading contract manufacturer for the medical industry, it becomes clear that the company has spent a good deal of time and effort ensuring that it remains at the leading edge of manufacturing practices. In today's manufacturing world, however, the team knows as well as anybody that the company must continue to push the boundaries of technology to improve responsiveness and reduce lead times if the operation is to remain competitive." Around four years ago we embarked on the World Class Manufacturing programme with the Cranfield School of Management," explains Steve Sandland, chairman and managing director of SMS. " Above all, the programme taught us that we must better exploit technology to minimise waste. Most importantly, we wanted to reduce waste in the lead time process and improve our response-to-problem time to achieve a genuine productivity increase.

" On another important issue – costing, SMS spent a year working with a business specialist from Grant Thornton. The requirement was for a new, technology based, costing system that would more effectively account for time spent by employees from shop floor to the highest level indirect, allowing the company to calculate all aspects of product costing. That is where Procon Associates, the UK-based MAPICS affiliate, came in. Procon proposed the MAPICS Paperless Manufacturing solution – the very latest product from MAPICS that was yet to go live in a UK installation. This solution fits the specification." We have been using MAPICS for MRP since SMS was formed in 1988, so naturally we were delighted when Procon came to us with

a new MAPICS solution that matched our needs," explains Wayne Brown, manufacturing operations manager.

" What we wanted was something that would extend the electronic collection and distribution of information to the manufacturing floor, allowing us a means of calculating the ' true' margin of specific orders and a way of understanding the total cost picture." Procon is installing the Manufacturing Data Collection and Communication (MDCC) module of the product; which provides any employee, from the shop floor to the customer service center, online access to complete, current information about a manufacturing order. The employees interface with the system via touch screens installed on the shop floor, entering up-to-date information after each order is completed. Brown believes the benefits of the solution are enormous: " The removal of waste is so key to our goals. Paperless Manufacturing means we have eliminated the printing of work orders and done away with unnecessary time spent on supervisory decision making. Crucially, the timeliness of the information being entered after each job also means we are now able to deal with problems and issues in real time, not a couple of days down the line when it is too late.

Not only does this increase our responsiveness, it means we are able to calculate whether we are doing good or bad business on every order."