

Clips & Clamps Industries Replaces Six Disparate Systems with the Plex Manufacturing Cloud



About the Company:

Clips & Clamps Industries (CCI) was founded in 1954 on Fitzpatrick Street in Detroit, Michigan. Since then the company has been supplying reliable metal stampings, s-clips, brackets, washers, wire forms, welded products, and assemblies to OEM and Tier 1 customers.

Business Challenges:

- The cost of upgrading CCI's ERP and five other systems became too expensive to maintain.
- Lack of integration and disparate systems resulted in duplicate data entry which required manual reconciliation.
- Legacy systems were cumbersome and not easy to use.

Solution Benefits:

- Replaced 6 disparate systems with a single manufacturing system of record.
- Avoided costly upgrades that could have potentially disrupted business—and gained immediate ROI.
- Real-time access to data for more visibility into operations.

There's a reason Plymouth, Michigan-based automotive metalformer Clips & Clamps Industries (CCI) has survived in this tumultuous industry since 1954. The company has continuously worked to improve efficiencies and utilize the most advanced technologies in all areas of its operations.

Its information systems are no exception. Facing the need for upgrades of several of the separate systems it used for ERP, gage controls, human resources, and other functions, CCI decided that maintaining and paying for regular upgrades to separate systems was not the most efficient use of its IT and financial resources. In addition, management recognized that the lack of integration among these various systems forced the workforce to invest time in duplicate data entry, manual reconciliation of data and reports, and other inefficiencies.

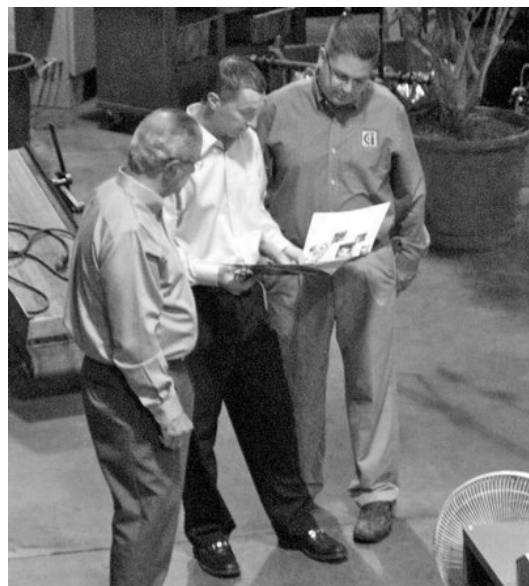
To address these challenges, CCI implemented a new, completely integrated manufacturing cloud ERP solution. The single system replaced six separate systems that CCI had used previously and brought along with it many additional functions.

Integrated System Improves Efficiency

Today, CCI has a consolidated view of the world through which all employees access the same information. They view critical information through dashboards in real time and are able to access and print real-time reports while filtering out data as needed.

The Plex Manufacturing Cloud has been the ideal all-in-one solution for CCI. It combines the capabilities of enterprise resource planning (ERP), manufacturing execution systems (MES), quality management, customer relationship management (CRM), shop floor integration, and much more. The system enables the company to more effectively and efficiently manage virtually every aspect of operations including bills of material, purchasing, receiving, inventory, quality, planning and scheduling, shipping, EDI, engineering change tracking, financials, and human resources.

Today, CCI employees leverage single points of data entry without having to maintain interfaces, avoiding duplication and replication. For instance, the employee list used for time and attendance is the same one used to track who



produced which part. And the same list used to complete quality checklists is the one used for strategic plan action items and related functions.

Because the Plex Manufacturing Cloud is a software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution in the cloud, all of CCI's data is securely housed and maintained off-site by Plex Systems, the developers of the system. The metalformer avoids costly servers, hardware, and energy costs. There's no need for internal IT maintenance, and CCI rests assured that their data is housed in a highly secure environment with back-up servers and industry-leading disaster recovery levels. In addition, enhancements are made to the software on a real-time basis at no additional cost to users. There are never new versions to install.

Immediate ROI

At the time CCI launched Plex Cloud ERP, the company had been facing imminent upgrades to several of its existing systems. The company was able to avoid these costs entirely.

Not having to pay upgrade costs for our old systems made Plex a break-even investment. When balanced against our cost avoidance, the launch of Plex cost us nothing and we had an immediate ROI. Who could argue with that?

—Jeff Aznavorian, Vice President and General Manager

Ease of Use

According to Aznavorian, Plex's user interface was also a big selling point for the system. With visual menu options and simple navigation, the system is intuitive for everyone—particularly employees working on the shop floor.

“With our previous systems, employees had to use codes to access menus and various pages, and this made things very confusing,” said Aznavorian.

With Plex, everything is visual and logical, and all employees can get to the screens, reports and data they need within just a few clicks.

—Jeff Aznavorian, Vice President and General Manager

“Because the system is so intuitive, on-the-floor training was quick and highly effective. The implementation didn’t disrupt our business, and employees in all departments are now able to access and use information to perform their jobs effectively.”

Improved Tooling Maintenance

Not only does the Plex Manufacturing Cloud meet CCI’s needs for its core operations, it has also brought improvements in some unexpected areas. Tooling maintenance is a case in point. CCI’s previous ERP solution did not track tooling use for maintenance purposes. To identify when maintenance was due, employees had to use pencil and paper to record the numbers of “hits” per tool. The Plex Manufacturing Cloud completely eliminates the need for this tedious, manual work.

The system automatically records the number of hits made per tool, per part, on an ongoing, real-time basis, and this drives a highly efficient and effective preventive maintenance schedule.

Also, if a machine goes down, Plex automatically notifies the CCI user and records the downtime. Users do not have to do this manually.

“Most of the tooling and maintenance systems I’ve seen before are cycle-based,” noted Aznavorian.

Easy Auditing and Financial Reporting

Because data in the Plex Manufacturing Cloud is easily accessible and always in real time, CCI no longer has to invest time preparing for audits. All required data is easily available and accessible.

“All we have to do is throw the information up on a screen,” explains Aznavorian. “Auditors never even have to leave the conference room to view all the reports and gather all the data they need. Of course, they are very happy not to have to walk around the plant and sift through files in order to do their jobs.”

The fact that all data entered into Plex is instantaneously accessible for use by other departments has made it simple for everyone to pull reports that provide them with precisely what they need.

“Our controller is our biggest cheerleader, and not just because the system is saving us so much money. He recently showed me a Pareto pie chart he developed in just a few minutes to analyze our scrap numbers. This was the kind of thing he would have had to invest hours in before to create manually. When your controller is your biggest fan, you know you’re doing something right,” said Aznavorian.

About Plex

Plex Systems® delivers industry-leading ERP and manufacturing automation to more than 600 companies across process and discrete industries. Plex pioneered cloud solutions for the shop floor, connecting suppliers, machines, people, systems, and customers with capabilities that are easy to configure, deliver continuous innovation and reduce IT costs. With insight that starts on the production line, the Plex Manufacturing Cloud® helps companies see and understand every aspect of their business ecosystems, enabling them to lead in an ever-changing market. Learn more at www.plex.com

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