

Semler Speeds Information Flow with SYSPRO

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■ The Company

Headquartered in Franklin Park, IL, Semler is a leader in the liquid handling field. Semler equipment regulates flow, pressure, temperature and other process variables. The firm's filtration technology extends to cartridges, bags, sheets, housings and custom systems that filter liquids and gases down to 0.1 micron levels. Semler produces a range of standard systems and also builds custom systems for end users and engineering firms. In fact, it is quite usual for Semler to invent a system or product to fill a customer's filtration needs or solve a liquid handling problem.

"Because SYSPRO recognizes a negative number, the system accommodates reverse job issues. When a customer changes an order in process, it allows us to reverse selected stock code items to remove material from a job and return it to stock."

- Loren H. Semler
President, Semler

Founded in 1905, Semler today is comprised of five operating groups, each specializing in a single sub-science of liquid handling technology: Liquid Handling; Fluid Purification; Pressroom Fluids Equipment; Hydraulics and Pneumatics; and Sentry Tank Accessories.

■ The Challenge

Semler's core business is chemical and industrial distribution. According to its President, Loren H. Semler, the industrial distribution industry is going through a period of rapid change. Traditional industrial supply channels are in a state of transition. Mature channels that relied exclusively upon supply logistics are obsolete in the information age. In order for today's distributor to grow, or for that matter to survive, the organization must add significant value to the products it distributes. Examples of significant added value can be found in Semler's turnkey approach to liquid handling and process systems. It designs complete systems, often incorporating products from the lines it distributes. Another way to add value is quick delivery. Like other businesses, Semler's customers often need product in a hurry. The firm maintains significant quantities of over 4,000 different products in its warehouse. These items range from pumps and meters to filters, valves, fittings, hose, tank vents, swivel joints, and gauges. The inventory is very active, and this extensive parts and product activity makes stringent inventory management a top priority for the company. But Semler also recognizes that having product on hand is only part of what's needed to keep pace with its customers' needs for quick delivery. Transactional processing speed has been under scrutiny at Semler since 1998.

Semler had been using a custom-designed "home-built" software for inventory tracking, order processing and other business processes. However, according to Vice President of Finance, Jeffrey K. Semler, Sr., the challenges of a changing business environment prompted the company to think about a new sys-

■ AT A GLANCE ■

COMPANY

Semler Equipment

INDUSTRY

Manufacturing



 **Semler Industries Inc.**
Skills in Handling Solutions



tem. The goal was to improve both the speed and accuracy of Semler's information system and prepare for business in the 21st century. Semler's old system was "paper bound." The simple task of looking up invoices and work orders took hours. Moreover, the firm had to shut down for two weeks every year to reconcile physical inventory with inventory records. This required the sales force to be pulled in from the field to assist in the reconciliation process, since it was most familiar with the company's range of products. "Our ideal was a software system that would grow with the company and improve our service to customers – one that would give us the ability to look up work orders and invoices on screen and use bar coding to track inventory on a real-time basis," says Semler.

In keeping with its vision for the future, Semler hired an information systems project manager who was challenged with the task of finding an integrated manufacturing, accounting and distribution software system that would best meet Semler's stringent requirements. Extensive research was conducted, from attending trade shows to the use of software evaluation packages. Recalls Semler, "One of the evaluation packages required us to answer 8,700 questions."

■ The Solution

"We narrowed the choice to SYSPRO enterprise business-software," Semler explains. "We went through several product demonstrations, studied the track record of SYSPRO and its reseller, Business Technology Partners, and contacted first- and second-tier references. Everything kept pointing to SYSPRO as the best fit. We also felt that SYSPRO had the same features and benefits provided by the more costly software systems offered by such giants as J.D. Edwards and SAP." Semler also liked the fact that SYSPRO had a

history of continually improving its software. "We knew we'd always be using the most technologically advanced system," he says.

■ The Result

Today, thirty-two individuals utilize SYSPRO on a daily basis. And every day, Semler's choice of SYSPRO is validated. The monthly closing now takes one hour at the end of the last business day of the month. Prior to the implementation of SYSPRO, the firm would literally have to shut down for an entire day to complete the month-end closing process. "We can run financials in a fraction of the time it used to take. We can even easily transfer data into Excel spreadsheets for further evaluation," says Semler. Equally as important, the process of taking inventory has been greatly simplified. Today, Semler tracks inventory using a bar coding system. Each bin is bar coded for bin number as well as the stock code for the product in the bin. Says Semler, "We no longer have to pull in the sales staff to help with the inventory count so their time is used far more productively in the field. This alone gives us a substantial return on our investment in SYSPRO." He points to other ways SYSPRO helps the company manage inventory with greater efficiency. "Because SYSPRO recognizes a negative number, the system accommodates reverse job issues. When a customer changes an order in process, it allows us to reverse selected stock code items to remove material from a job and return it to stock." Semler is no longer paper bound. Single page print-outs now take the place of multiple part forms. Moreover, SYSPRO simplifies the handling of custom orders. The system issues a Bill of Materials which is used both for quoting the job and the pulling of parts. For subsequent orders, the original Bill of Materials is simply reissued.