

## A window of opportunity

### Software system helps reduce lead-time from six weeks to nine days for window manufacturer

KITCHENER, ONTARIO-BASED GOLDEN WINDOWS HAS BEEN manufacturing windows for the residential market for just over 40 years. Two years ago, the company saw an opportunity to better manage its production, scheduling and inventory by implementing one complete front-to-back software system that efficiently takes the company from quoting through production to invoicing.

“Since we started using the software package from Friedman, we’ve had a great deal of success in growing the business,” says Paul Kreutner, special projects manager. “The software definitely keeps everything in order. Before the software, a lot of things were done manually. Also with the Friedman system, it’s a lot easier to keep a tight control on inventory, so we have been able to reduce our finished goods inventory as well as our raw materials inventory quite substantially. As far as scheduling, we have been able to reduce our lead time from six weeks to nine days due to a different process that we were able to adopt as a result of the Friedman system. It’s a hand-in-hand change in process that we couldn’t have done had we not had the software. Basically, the scheduling flexibility and the visibility we have now is just so much greater.”

The Friedman software package starts with a product called PowerBids, which the Golden Windows outside sales force uses to quote jobs. When those jobs become orders, the software converts them to firm orders for the builders, and they are sent over the Internet to the Golden Windows site. There, they are transformed into data that Golden Windows’ inside system can read. At that point the orders are checked for pricing, and from there they are scheduled all through the Friedman system and released to the shop floor in batches and run sizes that are acceptable for that day’s worth of production. Each order is able to be tracked to the customer all the way through the plant, and each of the subcomponents also is able to be tracked to a specific line on a specific order all through the plant.

The Friedman system also feeds interfaces to the Golden Window CNC machinery such as welders, saws and glass cutting equipment. Once the windows are built, they

are put in the warehouse for a short period of time until they are loaded onto trucks and shipped. Again, the shippers are all generated from the Friedman software, and once the windows are shipped, they are invoiced off of the same system.

“It’s a flexible system,” says Kreutner. “It’s a good system for our industry because we don’t build many things to stock anymore. We just build to order, and there are a lot of options because of custom colors, sizes, glass packages and hardware. When there are a lot of different options, it’s nice not to have to work on a static bill of materials because you would literally have millions of bills of materials. Basically, before the Friedman system, every time an order came in we would have a new bill of materials. With the Friedman system, those bills of materials are generated dynamically from a set of rules and logic, which you put into the system.”

Golden Windows manufactures wood, aluminum clad and vinyl windows and doors in its 125,000 sq.-ft. plant with as many as 160 employees. “As far as the wood windows go, we get rough cut raw lumber (pine) in random lengths,” explains Kreutner. “We rip it to length and then break out the lumber using upcut chop saws. We use Weinig moulders to mold the profiles. Then we use a double end tenoner to put the end tenons on and a Grecon fingerjointer to put together any fingerjointed lumber that can be used in nonvisible areas of the window.

“As for round shapes, we laminate multiple layers of veneer, glue them and put them around a template. A press forces any excess glue out and then a heating band helps dry it. Generally we have templates of our standard sizes. If we have a custom job, we cut another template out of MDF.”

*-Brooke Baldwin Wisdom*

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