

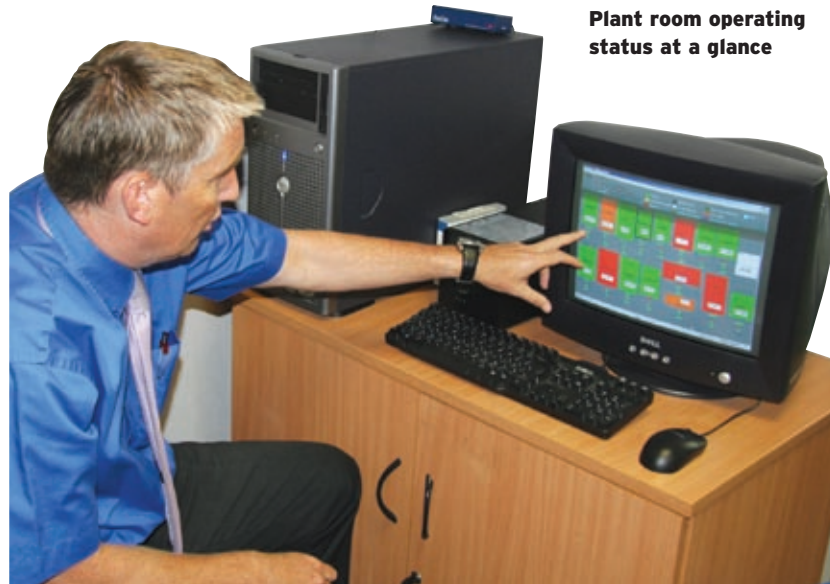
OGM's stopwatches are a thing of the past thanks to Intouch

Technical injection moulder OGM operates a modern manufacturing plant at Eynsham, Oxfordshire, designed to meet the exacting standards of the medical and electronics industries. The plant runs 15 Arburg and two Demag moulding machines, covering the range 25-400 tonnes. A high degree of automation has been adopted, with a view to world-class productivity. Managing director Paul Wightman commented: "Around 40% of OGM's turnover comes from work for the industrial electronics sector, and 28% from medical - where demand is holding up despite the current recession. Fortunately, one of our contracts is for moulding components for utility prepayment meters - a market which is roaring ahead at the moment!"

Monitoring and reporting brief

Until 2007, production monitoring and reporting at OGM lagged behind the rest of the operation in sophistication and efficiency, with timing by stopwatch, recording by pen and paper, and manual data entry into spreadsheets. OGM operations manager Wayne Holden championed the introduction of a more fit-for-purpose real-time production monitoring, reporting and planning system from Northampton-based Intouch Monitoring.

Holden set the scene: "We run three production shifts, 24 hours per day, with 10 people per shift, so labour costs are heavy. Shift managers used to spend as long as one hour at the end of each duty - chargeable as overtime - on manual recording and reporting. Moving to Intouch's automatic system therefore offered an immediate quantifiable benefit - let alone improvements to our overall "leanness" from analysing the wealth of information Intouch provides on both machine and operator performance. Before Intouch, a lot of this



Plant room operating status at a glance

information simply wasn't accessible and usable - 'if you can't measure it, you can't manage it!'"

Fundamentals of Intouch

The Intouch system uses straightforward hardware - a relay fitted to each machine (with minimal disruption to production) is activated once per operating cycle. The other essential component is a keypad for the machine operator, which is configured for each customer's particular needs. Machine operators record specific events (e.g. a tool change; a shutdown due to a fault) with dedicated keys on the pad. Swipecard or PIN code security can be included. Intouch communicates with the customer's computer system via a wireless or Ethernet connection, with real-time plant status viewable on any PC screen in a choice of formats.

Intouch offers multiple data reporting options, both tabular and graphical. OGM uses the daily production sheet (statistics for each machine giving the number of products moulded, run time, balance of order remaining etc.); material handler's sheet; analysis of machine downtime and causes of downtime; total plant downtime by cause; weekly average number of tool changes per shift; average tool change time. The production plan-

ning module can use any required timescale; perhaps daily (as in the automotive industry) up to 8-9 months ahead (for seasonal industries).

Commissioning for success

Wayne Holden recalls the installation and commissioning of OGM's Intouch system in May 2007: "Several dummy runs enabled troubleshooting before we went live. Intouch offers a combination of formal training for key staff on the system,

and informal coaching as part of commissioning. The first few weeks were spent on system honing and design changes - we found ourselves proficient enough to implement a different reporting structure in-house. The buy-in to Intouch from our staff has been excellent."

Holden couldn't be more enthusiastic about Intouch's favourable impact on OGM: "We benefited immediately from the enhanced visibility and control which Intouch provides for our manufacturing opera-

tion. Intouch has definitely informed OGM's continuous improvement programme - for instance, we've halved our average tool change time from 1.6 to 0.8 hours since adopting the system."

John Hardwick, Intouch's commercial director, commented on the OGM project: "With around 70% of our customers drawn from the injection moulding sector, we quickly felt at home tailoring our software to the OGM's particular requirements. We offer a customised, 'seamless' installation to each customer, adapted as necessary to their needs, rather than a choice of modules."

Customers come first with Intouch

Hardwick enlarged on Intouch's company philosophy: "Karl Edwin and I founded Intouch bringing a wealth of experience within manufacturing industry, with involvement in engineering, electronics and project management. My experience in production monitoring led us to develop an easy-to-operate and understandable monitoring package that can be as flexible in its capability as a customer wants it to be.

Our early research found that existing systems were usually expensive and too complicated. Often they were difficult for operators to understand and use, with superfluous functions clouding the reporting processes. There was also frustration at the lack of flexibility within these packages, and at poor support by suppliers and distributors. Intouch's work since 1997 has been the antithesis of the 'take it or leave it' attitude of others towards the individual requirements of potential customers."

Intouch is doing well despite the recession, according to Hardwick: "There are now around 100 Intouch installations on four continents, and every system we've sold is in active use. Most of our sales leads come via word of mouth, when satisfied Intouch users move to other companies. Despite the present economic climate, this is a record year for Intouch."

OGM's own Intouch system is set to grow, with the prospect of expansion at the Eynsham facility - including new injection moulding machines.

Shortly you will receive the new, clearly arranged Meusburger catalogue 2010/2011!



- » with 3,500 new articles
- » in a new, convenient design
- » featuring many mounting examples
- » perfectly complemented by our online- and the CD-catalogue

Precise, stress relieved standard mould components, high stock availability

meusburger

Meusburger Georg GmbH & Co KG | Standard moulds | Kesselstr. 42 | A-6960 Wolfurt
T 00 43 (0) 55 74 / 67 06-0 | F -11 | sales@meusburger.com | www.meusburger.com