



## Top Die Casting Drives Quality, Consistency with ERP from IQMS

### *Single-Source Enterprise Resource Planning System Best Fit for Quality Driven Company*

Top Die Casting Company understands the value of quality delivered at a competitive price, on time, every time. As a leading domestic, full-service provider of aluminum die castings and plastic-injected moldings, Top Die Casting serves an array of high-profile customers in both consumer and industrial markets. Founded in 1977, Top Die Casting has a long history of providing unequalled product quality and customer service, and is driven to “be the best in the business by doing things right the first time.”

Over the years, Top Die Casting has grown sales from \$1.5 million to over \$40 million by offering consistent quality and a “one-stop-shop” from design to packaged part. But while company growth has been steady, and quality output a mainstay, Top Die Casting was hindered in the past by an outdated, home-grown enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, and needed to update their internal IT system.

“Our old system had limitations that wasted a lot of valuable time,” explains Jeff Colson, application engineer at Top Die Casting. “People spent more time trying to figure out how to make things happen in spite of the system than they did focusing on the actual process of making quality parts.”

Housed in an older-style database that used index sequential files, the company’s previous system was inherently slow, especially when 20 or more people were using it. What’s more, the system had evolved through several different in-house programmers and stages of company growth that involved the transfer of system files from a DOS format to Windows. But with each system iteration, critical information such as production history and employee data was lost.

“We got to a certain point where sticking with the old system was no longer a viable option,” says Colson. “The information was in one database, but extracting it was difficult unless you were a programmer. We had to manually sketch out data just to see where we stood on things, and even then the data could be outdated or simply incorrect.”

To solve this issue, Top Die Casting sought a single-source, centralized ERP system that could provide real-time data accuracy to everyone in the company, from the shop floor to the top floor. The company established a team of key people who had the most detailed knowledge of the old system and fully understood what was necessary for its replacement. The team considered carefully what the company needed, from accounting and customer service to quality management and real-time production control. After reviewing a number of ERP systems, they found the best match in EnterpriseIQ by IQMS.



### *The Company*

Founded in 1977, Top Die Casting Company is a family-owned “one-stop-shop” for aluminum die castings and plastic-injected moldings. Top Die is ISO 9001:2000 certified and a preferred supplier for a wide base of customers, including markets such as consumer products; industrial; filtration; heavy vehicles; hydraulics; electronics; appliances; and more. Based in South Beloit, Illinois, Top Die Casting is a domestic full-service provider from design to packaged part. The company employs over 220 people in its three Northern Illinois plants and boasts annual sales over \$40 million.

### *Time Savings a Clear Benefit with Centralized Solution*

"EnterpriseIQ won out over the other systems because it keeps everything central in a single, reliable database," says Colson. "Some of the other systems we considered used more than one database for functions such as scanning, which seemed clunky. With EnterpriseIQ we did not have to cross over several systems to put things together. Now that the system is up and running, it's clear that the centralized format also delivers advantages in eliminating non-value added activities in all departments."

Like many other companies its size, Top Die Casting operates lean without the benefit of large numbers of employees to track and analyze data. According to Colson the biggest asset of having EnterpriseIQ in place is the time it affords key employees, like Nancy Hyser, the company's quality manager.

Along with two other employees, Hyser was responsible within the old system for tracking inventory, which Top Die Casting holds for its customers. Additionally, Hyser was tasked with manually inputting time card data from jobs run the previous day. This meant the company was always operating a day behind, and Hyser spent most of her time trying to keep pace with data entry.

"EnterpriseIQ lets people focus on their jobs rather than the mundane tasks that can drag down quality operations," says Hyser. "We used to have only one or two people who knew where inventory was. This often delayed deliveries and increased our holding costs. Now EnterpriseIQ keeps track of our inventory to the very last detail, so we aren't hassled by trying to chase down a customer's supply or rectify our counts against data that isn't in the system yet."

Top Die Casting relies on EnterpriseIQ's ease of use and access to information to make it is easy for anyone in the company to call up data anytime, anywhere, whether they are working on the shop floor or in an executive meeting. With direct access to all ERP related information, Top Die Casting has eliminated redundant data entry, costly errors, and time lags in shipping.

"EnterpriseIQ delivers incredible time savings by putting the same real-time information at the fingertips of all our employees," says Hyser. "The system increases our visibility and improves our reaction time by pushing data to those who need it. This has gone a long way in improving internal communications and has allowed us to turn our focus back to the things that matter, like delivering quality parts to our customers on time."

### *RealTime Accountability, Real-Time Results*

Top Die Casting implemented EnterpriseIQ throughout its facility in 2004. After running EnterpriseIQ alongside the old system for a brief period of time, the company went live with immediate results.

"EnterpriseIQ is user-friendly and easy to navigate, so the switch over was simple and everyone adapted quickly," says Colson. "We shipped and invoiced parts the same day we went live with no problems. It was like the IQMS system had always been in place."

Because EnterpriseIQ is a single database solution, written, developed and supported only by IQMS, Top Die Casting has found the system to be cohesive across its multiple facilities and entire supply chain.

Top Die Casting uses core ERP functionality such as AR, AP, Inventory Management, and Customer Service modules as well as enhanced functionality such as Quality, Wireless Warehouse Management, eCommerce, and RealTime Machine Monitoring. By supporting machine management in real-time, EnterpriseIQ allows the company to track all aspects of production immediately as parts are being made. The system automatically applies real-time data to the shop orders, and updates the ERP modules with the schedule and finished product counts, giving Top Die Casting a truer picture of what they can deliver to their customers and detailed costs of those deliveries.

“We like that EnterpriseIQ lets us see in real-time what is happening at all of our plants,” says Hyser. “This level of accountability is a big thing for our customers. With RealTime Machine Monitoring we’ve improved efficiency and productivity and are more responsive to customer needs.”

In fact, according to Hyser, RealTime Machine Monitoring has been instrumental in Top Die Casting’s ability to win new customer accounts: “RealTime Machine Monitoring is the wow factor that impresses potential customers,” she says. “When they see that EnterpriseIQ lets us take the pulse of the shop floor in the instant their parts are being made, it’s a big selling point. They typically don’t see that capability with our competitors or even within their own plants.”

### ***EnterpriseIQ Empowers Culture of Continuous Improvement***

EnterpriseIQ and RealTime Machine Monitoring have also helped Top Die Casting drive a cultural shift at every level of the company. In the past, two or three people acted as key business drivers whom others looked to for direction, now everyone – across multiple departments - can pitch in and do their part because they have the information to produce quality work.

With the historical and real-time data EnterpriseIQ provides, Top Die Casting operates a bonus system that empowers the company’s shop floor operators to work more efficiently. This allows the company to develop a culture of continuous improvement that could not have been considered using the previous system.

“It’s the shop floor aspect, combined with the core ERP, and the fact that EnterpriseIQ is made for manufacturers that gives IQMS an edge over other ERP systems,” says Hyser. “EnterpriseIQ with RealTime Machine Monitoring lets our operators see in easy-to-understand color coding whether their machine is running lean. Whereas before they might not have known there was a problem until it was too late, now they can stop problems before they occur. With EnterpriseIQ everyone is accountable, and the effort they put forth reflects that.”

## *Focused on Future Manufacturing Success*

Top Die Casting consistently wins business over its competition by adhering to strict quality standards and exceeding expectations every time. EnterpriseIQ by IQMS has been instrumental in that effort by giving the company business and plant management software designed specifically to help manufacturers run more effectively and more profitably. Yet for all the many benefits Top Die Casting has obtained since implementing the system five years ago, Colson notes there is more to come.

"We are always expanding on what we have because there is so much available in EnterpriseIQ," he says. "Our customers constantly make new demands of us, and with EnterpriseIQ we can meet those requests without hesitation. With EnterpriseIQ we can focus on the future and our ambition to succeed instead of spending time trying to force our ERP system to comply."

### **In Brief**

As a leading domestic, full-service provider of aluminum die castings and plastic-injected moldings, Top Die Casting Company serves an array of high-profile customers in both consumer and industrial markets. Since 1977, Top Die Casting has grown sales from \$1.5 million to over \$40 million by offering consistent quality and a "one-stop-shop" from design to packaged part. But while company growth has been steady, Top Die Casting was hindered in the past by an outdated enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. To solve this issue, Top Die Casting sought a single-source, centralized ERP system that could provide real-time data accuracy to everyone in the company. The company found the best match in EnterpriseIQ by IQMS. With EnterpriseIQ in place, Top Die casting has improved quality output, achieved time and cost savings, gained better visibility and control of inventory, and eliminated manual data entry. But by far the biggest benefit is new customers gained. According to quality director Nancy Hyser, EnterpriseIQ with RealTime Machine Monitoring is the "wow" factor that impresses potential customers. "When they see that EnterpriseIQ lets us take the pulse of the shop floor in the instant their parts are being made, it's a big selling point," she says. "That level of accountability is a big thing for our customers. They typically don't see it with our competitors or even within their own plants."

#### ***Return on Investment***

- Improved quality
- Enhanced internal communication
- Achieved time and cost savings
- Gained better visibility and control of inventory
- Eliminated manual data entry
- Gained new customers
- Improved accountability across the enterprise

#### ***Software***

EnterpriseIQ™ ERP software system with RealTime Machine Monitoring, Quality Management, EDI/XML eCommerce, Preventative Maintenance, Wireless Warehouse Management, Customer Relationship Management, Statistical Process Control, Fixed Assets, Business Intelligence, Forecasting, Project Manager, and more.

#### ***Hardware***

Oracle database with windows-based PCs