



INJECTION MOLDING AND TOOLING MADE TO PLAN

Production Scheduling at starlim

From small quantities up to several 100 million units per year – starlim is considered the largest silicone processor for technical molded parts in the world. For the mass production, efficient processes that deliver fully functional parts, free of faults, is of the highest priority. To meet these production needs and to ensure transparency and seamless flow of information between processes, starlim is using GANTTPLAN, the intelligent detailed planning tool from DUALIS.

Largest silicone processor for technical moldings

The starlim-sterner group specializes in the development and production of silicone parts using both single and multi-component injection molding technology. The focus is on mass production and the contract manufacturer and B2B supplier is considered the market leader, in the manufacture of molded silicone products, with around 1,500 employees at international locations in Europe, Canada, China and Morocco.



At starlim, the silicone products are developed to precision, and required tooling is designed and built for fully automatic process optimized production to clean room standards when needed. Before a product can be released for mass production, it is prototyped and produced for functional testing so that the end product will be free from defects and fulfill the task it was intended for, without failure.

To help coordinate production and provide more efficiency in the delivery of their products, in 2014 starlim began using GANTTPLAN for their Advanced Planning and Scheduling (APS) needs. Today GANTTPLAN is fully integrated with the injection molding process and is delivering full transparency and a seamless flow of information between the planning and production departments.

Highly flexible planning for tooling

starlim uses GANTTPLAN to control the injection molding lines and the associated planning of the tooling. The solution is used as a central platform for generating realistic and optimized production plans. This results in a high level of flexibility for mapping the planning requirements - especially concerning the tooling. In the autumn of 2016, a GANTTPLAN corporate license was acquired to roll-out the software globally. Due to the high degree of standardization in the GANTTPLAN model and starlim's global processes, the planning system was effortlessly introduced to the Canadian facility.



From prototype to productions

Before using GANTTPLAN, planning managers at starlim were already working with an integrated planning tool. But with such rapid expansion and exponential growth in production volumes, the planning process had become much more complex.

"We simply grew out of our previous system. We were at a point where there were so many planning parameters and options to handle, it was no longer humanly possible to efficiently plan our production," says Markus Bründl, Vice President of Operations at starlim.

"GANTTPLAN now provides us with an optimal and feasible production plan, within seconds. Our planning staff now focus on specialized areas that software and automation cannot yet handle."

Martin Meindlhuemer, Production Planning and Control Manager at starlim



People and technology that go hand-in-hand

starlim required a tool that would grow with the company's needs and would manage the injection molding process for a first step. It was important that the knowledge from internal planning experts could be incorporated into GANTTPLAN to support their daily tasks, and that a good human – technology balance was achieved, that would work hand-in-hand with everybody. To begin with, DUALIS provided a GANTTPLAN prototype, working with a small group of injection molding machines. This demonstrated the effectiveness and potential future benefits enough, for starlim to request a connection between GANTTPLAN and their current APplus ERP software. Fortunately GANTTPLAN's add-on functionality avoided a lengthy ERP integration project.

Right from GANTTPLAN's first application, the intuitive interface and high level of functionality within the planning tool, proved to be very convincing for starlim. Based on DUALIS's many years of experience in production planning and their unique development expertise, starlim could envisage the benefits from a long-term relationship with the Dresden based IT provider. The collaboration resulted with a tailor-made APS tool to meet the needs of next generation products that is adaptable to future requirements. The GANTTPLAN roll-out proceeded over a 5 month period, in parallel to ongoing operations and without any disruptions, and the „open heart surgery“ went very smoothly.

The result: Scheduling 1.000 orders in just 40 seconds

Today, the APS tool is used on a regular daily basis, to plan the production on the injection molding lines, by generating an optimized order sequence, and assigning all the production resources, including the machines, the tooling and the personnel. The production plan caters for both the pre-series runs (prototype production) and series planning (mass production), which are all produced using the same production equipment. Each planner works with their local GANTTPLAN model, but in a collaborative planning process.

“GANTTPLAN opens up a new world of possibilities for us. One of the biggest benefits with the APS software is avoiding double booking of resources. Due to GANTTPLAN's extensive range of functions, we no longer need to worry about it, it's just taken for granted. Additional features such as interactive planning or dynamic setup optimization combined with high transparency and ease of use are highly appreciated by our staff. Now each employee can avoid dealing with complicated processes and fully concentrate their energy on the planning operation,” says Martin Meindlhuemer, Production Planning and Control Manager at starlim.

Another positive aspect is that the tool

has an integrative, flexible and modular structure that offers corresponding features such as color schemes for the visualization of company-specific data. Overall, there have been major improvements to starlim's process quality through increased transparency, time savings, error prevention, and a broader array of planning options.

Due to the high adaptability and expandability of GANTTPLAN, starlim can extend the application of GANTTPLAN as and when needed. Plans for the next phase to use the software to manage the in-house manufacturing of tooling and molding machinery are already underway. In the final expansion, the GANTTPLAN setups from the injection molding and toolmaking divisions will communicate via the central ERP system.



Facts and Figures



Contract manufacturer, B2B supplier, Tier 2 and Tier 3 supplier and world's largest liquid silicone processor



Annual international group production of over 14 billion silicone parts



Around 1500 employees in the corporate group



Scheduling of over 1000 orders in just 40 seconds



Quality gains from GANTTPLAN application, through increased planning transparency, time savings, error prevention and a broader range of planning options



"A new colleague joined us during GANTTPLAN's introductory phase and was thrown into the deep end, so to speak. With almost no experience in planning, and with the help of GANTTPLAN, she was able to manage planning tasks right from the beginning."



Günter Fuchsberger, Operation Manager at starlim

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