



## AW ENGINEERING REAPS BENEFITS OF PRODUCTION CONTROL SOFTWARE DURING FACTORY MOVE

AW Engineering utilises PSL Datatrack production control software for day-to-day management of its subcontract CNC machining services from its new factory in West Molesey, Surrey. With customers in the aerospace, architectural, automotive, lighting and PPE sectors, AW Engineering's production capabilities are based around extensive CNC machining and turning facilities as well as drilling, grinding, milling, punching, sawing and tapping machinery. Treatments and finishes are also offered through approved subcontractors.

The company had relied upon a spreadsheet-based administration system to manage production, an approach that had proven too manual and time-consuming. Investment in PSL Datatrack has changed all that and the software's benefits were further reinforced by the role it played during the factory move.



*Drone & photography by Mark Eslick Graphics Limited*

Some three years ago, the company recognised the need to look to the future and streamline its operations. An alternative approach to administration was necessary as the existing Excel spreadsheet and Word document-based system, whilst accurate, was too slow in terms of having to re-enter data and constantly update records. "We needed a production control system that was designed specifically for the engineering services we provide rather than some generic software that was over complicated, not tailored for our needs or included unnecessary features," says Mark Felstead, Managing Director.

Onsite demonstrations of PSL Datatrack and a number of other software systems were arranged. The great synergy between how AW Engineering wanted to operate its business and the control that PSL Datatrack could bring to production and administration was instantly recognised. "We initially invested in a number of PSL Datatrack modules and benefitted immediately from closer control of our quotations and sales/purchase order processing functions," comments Mark. "What's more, information for a quotation only needed to be entered once and would then run right through the factory once an order had been secured, with no duplication of data required."

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The investment in PSL Datatrack formed part of AW Engineering's continual investment in new technology and plans for new premises, which came to fruition during the Covid-19 pandemic. Mark declares that PSL Datatrack really proved its worth then because, with staffing issues, he was virtually running the business single-handedly for a time. He was able to call upon PSL Datatrack support during the move, which assisted with key aspects of administration and documentation updates to ensure the transition to running from the new site was seamless.

With training from PSL Datatrack, the original switch from manual administration to a designated production control system proved straightforward as the system is intuitive and simple to navigate. Existing customer records were imported, as this critical information would form the basis of all future quotations and subsequent production information. Thanks to the flexibility of the software, quotation letters were simply customised to produce AW Engineering's preferred layout. "We have been able to tweak our requirements as we go along with remote support from PSL Datatrack," says Mark.

With many machine tools in operation at any one time, scheduling work effectively with spreadsheets was very difficult. With the Sequential Scheduler module from PSL Datatrack, which provides the sequence of jobs that should pass through each cost centre to fulfil an order, AW Engineering can clearly see the capacity available. "From a sales viewpoint, understanding job scheduling and machine availability allows us to maximise shop floor capacity and take on new work. We can confidently tell a prospective customer that we can do a job even at short notice and ensure delivery at the agreed time," continues Mark.

The Sequential Scheduler, together with the Shop Floor Data Collection module, has provided powerful management information. Tool Definitions has also improved overall efficiency by enabling AW Engineering to catalogue available tooling and replenish tools before there is a shortage, in just the same way as materials are recorded and stocked in the Material Stocks module.

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Web: [www.psldatatrack.com](http://www.psldatatrack.com)

Tel: 01344 827312

Email: [sales@psldatatrack.com](mailto:sales@psldatatrack.com)

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AW Engineering is now taking significant steps to roll out total use of PSL Datatrack throughout the shop floor. As the company looks to move towards running a paperless operation, team members are taking individual responsibility for different parts of the system using laptops.

*Drone & photography by Mark Eslick Graphics Limited*

Overall, Mark is of the firm opinion that PSL Datatrack has made the company more efficient and profitable. "Quotations can be raised much more quickly and the software also shows us where we are and are not spending money. We expect to further invest in PSL Datatrack and are currently looking at the possible introduction of modules for inspection and gauge calibration to take the company to the next level of manufacturing quality and efficiency," he concludes.

Prospec Systems Limited  
Lily Hill House,  
Lily Hill Road,  
Bracknell,  
Berkshire. RG12 2SJ

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