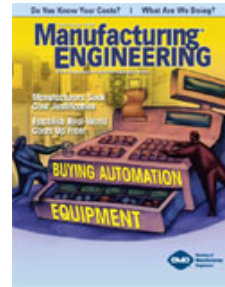


Manufacturing ENGINEERING



Manufacturing Engineering magazine delivers information you need to remain a leader, whether you are a job shop owner or other manufacturing professional and whether you work for a small, specialized shop, mid-sized supplier or large OEM.

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Saving Time, Money, and Lives

Controlling and improving the management of inventory while reducing the number of second-day and next-day shipments due to stock shortages is every company's challenge.

It's especially important for Holmatro Inc. (Glen Burnie, MD), a leading global designer, manufacturer, and distributor of UL-listed and NFPA-1936-compliant hydraulic rescue tools. Founded in 1967, Holmatro manufactures a full line of hydraulic rescue tools, heavy lifting equipment, pneumatic lifting bags, and shoring equipment and maintains a significant amount of equipment available for emergency deployment 24/7. The company manufactures in three factories on two continents.

Holmatro management determined that to meet demand for its critical life-saving products in a timely manner meant that its cutting tool inventory process needed to be improved. To keep better control of its tooling inventory, the most logical answer was to hire additional personnel to maintain and check inventory levels. Then a new idea was proposed: a tool management system that allows ease of use and a way to control and maintain tool inventory levels while tracking usage.

After reviewing several systems, Holmatro selected the Matrix tool management system from Iscar Metals Inc. (Arlington, TX). The Matrix was ultimately chosen for the software, cabinet design, and the support and training that accompanied the purchase of the system.

Matrix combines the automated tool dispenser with management software to control inventory, streamline purchasing, and drive down costs.

Access to an item stored in Matrix's locked bins is electronically controlled by the management software according to pre-defined authorizations. Matrix features a flexible system that offer a variety of drawer and bin configurations. Addon cabinets are connected with a click of a cable.



Holmatro designs, manufactures, and distributes UL-listed and NFPA-1936-compliant hydraulic rescue tools.

"We researched many products that offered distribution, inventory control, and tracking," says Chuck Cain, Holmatro manufacturing engineer. "After we saw the demonstration of the Matrix in action, we knew this was the product for us. Our machinists were issued badges with bar codes for easy log in and we received 14 hr of in-house training. We also utilized the existing bar codes and EDPs of our tooling. The reports worked as promised, giving us three emails per day to address shortages as well as one transaction report. Matrix interface and the touch screen are easy to understand at any skill/experience level. Custom scripts made our valuation reports accurate and current. Overall, our Matrix experience will lead us to budget and purchase a second cabinet in the coming year."



Iscar's Matrix tool management system combines the automated tool dispenser with management software to control inventory, streamline purchasing, and drive down costs.

All of the last minute stock issues disappeared, according to Cain. All of the operators took a closer look at how the tools were being used as well as when they were changing tools resulting in a better CPU. Now Holmatro had the ability not only to know they had certain tools in inventory, but the ability to track which tools were being used on which machines throughout the manufacturing facility.

By investing in the right equipment, Holmatro has saved an estimated 520 hr of additional labor and created an estimated \$108,000 annual savings. The Iscar technical Matrix team facilitated implementing the software and equipment.

Benefits of the Matrix include improved or increased 3Ps (performance-productivity-profitability) through lower tooling costs. Typically, employees become more aware of tooling usage, costs, and impact on production. Stock shortages and shipping costs are reduced, and problems become more apparent and are addressed in a timely fashion.

For more information on Iscar Metals, go to www.iscar.com or telephone 817.258.3200.