



Ringele AG

Solutions in sheet metal. Processes in the flow. Reduce Time to Market

Metal processing, toolmaking and fixture construction

Name:

Ringele AG

Website:

www.ringele.ch

Products and Technologies:

Customized products made from sheet metal from individual parts to complete systems

Location:

Pratteln near Basel, CH

Employees:

180 employees

proALPHA customer since:

2006

Focus on:

Production planning & control, workflow management

Highlights

- 98% delivery reliability thanks to consistent production planning & control
- Consistent process improvements: productivity increased by 50% within 10 years
- proALPHA APS: resource-optimized scheduling of about 500 very heterogeneous work orders running in parallel
- Workflow-based and digitalized processes through to invoicing
- Department-specific scenarios provide users with relevant data from all functional areas with just one click
- Significant Analyzer reports for the management

Ringele AG helps its customers bring their products more quickly and successfully to the market. The parts the Swiss supplier of sheet metal solutions delivers to Germany, Austria, Switzerland and other countries are complex and of strategic importance to the respective final assembly. This is as true for the shiny front of a high-end coffee machine as it is for the sterilization container in medical appliances, which must comply with strict regulations. To deliver the required quality and precision in a timely manner and to optimally support the value-added chain of its customers, the metal processing company in the Swiss municipality of Pratteln has oriented its production and administration toward lean management standards for more than 15 years now. As the digital nervous system for corporate processes, the comprehensive ERP solution proALPHA provides the data basis thanks to which the company has accomplished to increase its productivity by 50 percent within the last 10 years and keeps on realizing further optimization potentials.

"The functional scope of the integrated, comprehensive ERP solution proALPHA has perfectly met our needs as a mid-sized company from the very beginning. A compact and yet easily expandable package."

Urs Leuenberger, Management of Ringele AG

By orienting its strategy toward lean management, Ringele is tackling wastefulness, not only in terms of material and resources. The business processes and cycle times in production are consistently being put to the test. They are automated with the comprehensive ERP solution proALPHA wherever possible. Otherwise, the management fine-tunes organizational processes, commonly on the basis of information from the ERP system. And their success is respectable. The company has accomplished to considerably accelerate the whole ordering process over the last 10 years. Today, Ringele is capable of handling the same number of orders with only 50 percent of the capacity. Moreover, the company greatly benefits from the automatic orchestration of work orders in proALPHA with a delivery reliability that now amounts to almost 98 percent.

Lean Management and ERP: Lean Methods to Tackle Immense Complexity

Ringele applies the lean management principle for eliminating waste in proALPHA and all other fields to the greatest possible extent. The goal is to use the functions available in the ERP solution in the best possible way. "Companies which don't use their ERP system properly are taking the risk of an enormous loss of efficiency," emphasizes Urs Leuenberger, co-owner and responsible for overall logistics at Ringele. "proALPHA helps us to become quicker and to optimally meet our customers' requirements. This makes the ERP solution an important factor for our company, and we are constantly striving to even better exploit all its functionalities."

A special challenge lies in the complexity of the company's customer projects. "The products our customers order can't be found in any catalog. Every single one of them requires individual engineering. We

design and manufacture the parts exactly according to the customer's requirements, be it a single piece or lot sizes up to 10,000 pieces," Leuenberger explains. "To be able to offer competitive prices, we need better processes and skills than our competitors."

The 6,000 orders placed with Ringele every year could not be any more diverse. While two to three employees are taking shifts in welding one product for 1,000 hours, other parts in small series only take six or seven work steps to be completed and are finished within just three hours. Ringele ensures the quality of its products with a great vertical integration, which generates 75 percent of the company's turnover. This means that Ringele can control all important processes all by itself: laser and die cutting, bending and welding robots, sophisticated forming, surface treatments like powder coating and electropolishing, and complex final assemblies.

Automated Production Planning & Control Through to the Finish

With integrated production planning and control, proALPHA perfectly meets the requirements of this vertical integration as well as those of the complex,



heterogeneous products and projects. When a customer places an order, Ringele's Sales team enters all master files in proALPHA and sends the corresponding order confirmation using the ERP system. The engineering data are adopted from the CAD system, which is connected to proALPHA via an interface. Next, all processes, BOMs and work orders are created.

The scheduling in proALPHA APS is oriented toward the date requested by the customer. The system automatically calculates the start date for every single work order so that all necessary tasks can be completed in the right quality with the optimal timing. Not an easy undertaking as there always is an average of 500 open work orders to be handled simultaneously. Production control keeps tabs on all resources like the employees' leave times as well as machine downtimes due to maintenance work when the stroke rate defined in proALPHA has been reached.

Workflows reliably control all necessary steps, from checking, releasing and scheduling through to the completion and delivery to the customer including an automatically created shipping document. This is the only paper document in the whole production process. The creation and digital transmission of invoices by e-mail has also been largely automated in proALPHA.

Custom-Fit Scenarios, Powerful Reports: Relevant Information at a Glance

In Sales, Financial Accounting and Production, all proALPHA users are able to keep tabs on all information relevant to their work using the standard scenarios Ringele has created for each user group. The work order scenario, for instance, is made up of eight windows. They contain all data relevant to production from various functional areas of the system: What kind of order is this? When does it have to be delivered? What activities need to be performed and which ones have already been completed? How much costs have been incurred?

"I'm responsible for logistics. With proALPHA, I can track every order by the minute and always see its status so that I can take action whenever necessary," says Urs Leuenberger. Furthermore, the management can view complex reports in the proALPHA Analyzer, for example to see the cost status of all the work in



progress. It includes all orders that have been released and started anywhere in the company – an important KPI for the company's balance.

Make the Treasured Data Shine

To ensure that the management receives reliable information from the ERP system so they can react accordingly, the data quality must be right. This is true for any data in the system, be it correct basic data, up-to-date prices and processing times, correctly entered employee reports after the completion of a particular work step, or any other data. "proALPHA is rooted at the top management level because it's the essence of our business, the basis of our success," explains Leuenberger. "We therefore use binding standards for all data types and departments. They may only be created and released by the persons responsible, and they are updated continuously. All employees who enter data receive appropriate training."

Every four years, Ringele takes the release of the new proALPHA version as an opportunity to thoroughly clean the data and to keep the system as lean as possible. "We've chosen a four-year interval. This way, we can use the proALPHA version to its full potential and at the same time avoid having too big migration efforts," says Leuenberger, who is currently working on an upgrade to proALPHA version 7.1 with a project team. The proALPHA migration manager helps clean the master files and recent transaction data and to adopt them without any errors. "Compared to the last migration, we were able to reduce our active items from 70,000 to 20,000 by means of systematic archiving. This saves a significant amount of time for searching."

"proALPHA is the essence of our business. We invest a lot of time in processes that ensure a flawless data quality in the ERP system. This lays the foundation for sound management decisions and our success."

Urs Leuenberger, Management of Ringele AG

Interfaces, Mobility, Quality Management: Further Efficiency Gains Already Scheduled

Even though the success gained with proALPHA so far is quite notable, Leuenberger is not completely satisfied yet: "There's more to get out of proALPHA. Let's take our orders for example. There are still waiting times between the operations, stock placements and stock removals. We're currently using the lean production principles and proALPHA to develop new approaches to reduce these times." They are also planning to further develop their own costing system. Until now, it has been a separate solution. In future, the relevant material prices, raw materials, standard and customer data are to be transmitted to the costing system directly from proALPHA via an interface.

Ringele also intends to further digitalize all workstations in the medium term. The mobile solution by proALPHA shall promote this development in the storage and warehouse. They are also planning to have the employees in production log their orders in and out right at their workstations using mobile devices. Currently, they are still using terminals that run proALPHA Plant Data Collection (PDC).

Ringele is about to introduce several modules of the quality management solution QS1 by proALPHA's solution partner QSC. Once it is fully integrated into the ERP system, this solution will help Ringele to synchronize the management of measurement devices, to make the measured data available for further use

in proALPHA and to map complaint management. Here too, the company will be able to benefit from the flawless data basis and to get even better for their customers.

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As of 11/2020

User report