



Multi-Plant Brewery Reduces Number of Late Jobs by >20% with Advanced Planning and Scheduling

Since its start in 1991, the company has grown exponentially. The master scheduler joined in 1999 and has seen production double five times since. This massive growth led to increasingly complex manufacturing and distribution practices. The brewery has had to transition from manual brewing to automated, handwritten logs to scanned bar codes, from six brands to well over 100.

Results

- Reduced setup time by 30% with what-if scenario planning and modeling
- Reduced number of late jobs by 20%
- Provided meaningful data to teams for just-in-time ordering of storage and packaging
- Created transparency among plants for offloading and coordination due to delays or emergencies

From homebrewer to brewery with extraordinary growth

Since the company's start in 1991, the brewery has grown exponentially. The master scheduler joined the team in 1999 and has seen production double five times since. This massive growth led to increasingly complex manufacturing and distribution practices. The brewery has had to transition from manual brewing to automated, handwritten logs to scanned bar codes, from six brands to well over 100.

Belgium, 1988: The founder of the Colorado-based brewery was an aspiring young homebrewer riding his mountain bike with "fat tires" through European villages famous for beer. He would return to Fort Collins, CO, with an imagination full of recipes and a handful of ingredients ready to embark on a whole new journey.

The entrepreneur's Belgian-inspired brews garnered enough praise from friends and neighbors that Jeff and

his wife took their basement brewery commercial in 1991. Today, the brewery exists as a 100% employee-owned company dedicated to the production of world-class beer, the environment, and community — the Core Values initially set by the founders.

Explosive growth not without challenges

The master scheduler remarks, “With two breweries, we need production planning and scheduling analytics tools for visibility between plants. If something happens in the Fort Collins plant, we now understand capacity in the Asheville plant and vice versa. Having a production planning and scheduling solution for communication is imperative.”

He continues, “These days, the consumer wants more, and they like variety. That presents fun challenges to schedulers like me.”

The company team originally managed their brewing schedule in a notebook and on a dry-erase board. In 2003, they adopted Excel but still kept some shipping and receiving logs on paper. Though spreadsheets worked for a while, the platform was too unstable. Excel would crash and become unusable, or someone would mistype or delete a part of a formula and disseminate the wrong information throughout the organization. Managing the spreadsheets became a time-consuming burden with significant risks, relying heavily on tribal knowledge. The team needed one place to store and find all of their scheduling details.

“

With two breweries, we need production planning and scheduling analytics tools for visibility between plants. If something happens in the Fort Collins plant, we now understand capacity in the Asheville plant and vice versa. Having a production planning and scheduling solution for communication is imperative.

Master Scheduler, Colorado-Based Brewery

”

First came notebooks, then spreadsheets, and finally advanced planning and scheduling

In 2012, the company outgrew its accounting software and migrated to Microsoft AX, a popular enterprise resource planning (ERP) software. The spreadsheets the planners had been using until then became even more of a pain point; Excel did not communicate well with AX. In addition, planners and managers would have to re-sequence the schedule to suit their methods.



The master scheduler decided to implement an advanced planning and scheduling system in concordance with the ERP transition, largely because it integrated seamlessly with AX and provided great visibility. As a result, teams on the production floor can now see changes to the schedule in real-time.

“Instead of seeking and tracking down information, it is being ‘radiated’ to our team. Our guys can see if things are received on the line. We can click a button to see how many cases we’ve run, and then monitor that as it goes. The advanced planning and scheduling solution aligns us more.”

“
Instead of seeking and tracking down information, it is being ‘radiated’ to our team. Our guys can see if things are received on the line. We can click a button to see how many cases we’ve run, and then monitor that as it goes. The advanced planning and scheduling solution aligns us more.

Master Scheduler, Colorado-Based Brewery

”

Results bigger than a pint

The production planning and scheduling solution gives the master scheduler and the other planners the capability of what-if scenarios, meaning that the software can suggest changes to operations with supportive modeling.

This type of dynamic planning has reduced the brewery’s setup time by 30%.

Furthermore, the entire team can infer from the data presented in the solution when certain brews are expected to finish, and when to order the appropriate storage and packaging containers.

The production planning and scheduling system has reduced the total number of late jobs by more than 20%.

Since implementing the software, the company has opened a second brewery half a nation away from its headquarters. The production planning and scheduling solution gives planners transparency that is ideal for a multi-plant environment. If there’s a disruption in process—such as a delay or emergency—at one brewery, the planning team can easily coordinate to offload orders to the other location. The master scheduler can now remove himself from the day-to-day fires and dive into details as he sees fit, to continue to improve customer service and production efficiency.

ABOUT ON TIME EDGE

Accelerate digital transformation with On Time Edge for an agile, accurate supply chain and manufacturing operations excellence. We deploy and integrate supply chain solutions and smart manufacturing systems, so they work the way they’re supposed to and your company gets the ROI you expect.