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Wausau Container Corporation Expects to Transform Its Business and Production Management after Implementing HiFlow MIS



Paperboard manufacturer positions itself for the future by embracing an automated Industry 4.0 solution.

PRESS RELEASE FROM [HIFLOW SOLUTIONS](#)

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MIAMI — [Miami FL, June 2024] HiFlow Solutions, a leading provider of flexible MIS/MES systems for label and packaging manufacturers, today reported that Wausau Container Corporation implemented its systems to help more efficiently manage the business. The 31-year-old company has 86 employees and operates with two litho, one digital, and four flexographic presses, producing folding cartons for dairy and other industries. Its efforts to seek out and employ the latest technological innovations continue, as evidenced by its implementation of HiFlow MIS/ERP solution.

Amy Plier, owner of Wausau Container, notes that when the company was founded, they were careful with their cash reserves and engaged her brother, a computer programmer, to create a manufacturing order entry solution that would also generate packing lists and invoices. "Over the last 30 years," she explains, "we have worked with another individual to continue development of the system, and we have added shop floor data collection, barcoding, inventory reporting, and more. However, the system was based on FoxPro, which was purchased by Microsoft and then discontinued. In addition, system development and maintenance are basically side projects for the programmer. So that's what drove the decision to look for a packaged software solution."

Plier points out that the company needed a solution that was easy to integrate with other systems, including Great Plains accounting, which was not integrated with FoxPro, resulting in the need to enter data twice. The company also had a manual scheduling board and was using Excel for estimating. Plus, she adds, "The programmer felt we were getting too large for him to support. The inefficiencies of these manual processes, the lack of integration, and the concern we might lose our programmer were key drivers in the decision process to search for a packaged solution. We needed to increase both the integration of our software infrastructure and the automation in our workflow. HiFlow is enabling achievement of both those goals and more."

Even though HiFlow has a number of folding carton installations worldwide, Plier notes that each company has slightly different needs. "We appreciated the fact that we had access to customizable dashboards using Microsoft's Power BI, as well as extensive production, warehouse, and sales reports out of the box, and we have been able to dial in our Power BI reporting even more so we can better customize our reporting. Also important to us was its ability to integrate with our other internal software solutions, including our Microsoft Dynamics GP accounting system. We did not want siloes of information — we wanted to see a full 360-degree real-time view of our business, and HiFlow will give us that as we complete these final customizations." Plier also notes that she is creating customized reports to track work that is being outsourced, something the previous system did not have, but it will be developed with HiFlow. "As we grow," she says, "we find we are outsourcing a bit more, and having good real-time reporting on that work is critical."

In making the decision, Plier believed that HiFlow was scalable and would help the company proactively grow its business. "It's a comprehensive, integrated, and automated Industry 4.0 solution," she adds. "It includes Scada monitors to track plant productivity and operator performance in real time, and it uses smart scheduling to best utilize machine time, although we are still fine-tuning the scheduling system to meet our specific needs. Its Machine Execution System (MES) module offers real-time data exchange with machines and devices and helps us better manage our warehousing operation. The overall goal is to have a system that gives us a full 360-degree view of our business, allowing us to both react in real time if issues arise, and to better plan our workload, staffing and more. That also means that we will be able to get more work out the door with the same or fewer staff members and that will have a very positive effect on our bottom line. And we are making great progress toward that goal, thanks to the excellent support from the HiFlow team."

Plier also likes the customizable dashboards that HiFlow offers, citing that as another game changer for the company. "We collect a lot of data right now," she says, "but being able to mine that data in a way that is meaningful for running our business and making decisions has proven to be a bit difficult. So being able to write our own reports and access data in real time and in a meaningful way will give us the ability to quickly make informed decisions. We will also be able to implement better purchasing controls, tying purchasing into accounting. That's really important with the volatility in paperboard and other commodity pricing right now."

She also appreciates the fact that HiFlow will aggregate all the assets associated with a particular job, including the ability to attach PDFs of CAD drawings, which will make estimating much more efficient. "Currently," she notes, "estimates are created in Excel and then need to be reentered into Word for the customer quotes. Estimators often have to go searching for necessary assets, such as the CAD drawings. Not only is this time-consuming but there is a significant opportunity for error. We also expect to be able to get better data on actual versus estimates, so we can continuously improve our estimating process. In addition, our customer service reps can be much more efficient, accessing everything from their desks instead of wandering around looking for information. The system will be a game changer for them as well!"

Other efficiencies Plier expects to benefit from include the ability to leverage die cutting templates across several customers; for example, she explains, the company produces a lot of butter cartons that are the same size and shape across multiple customers. "Segmenting the business this way will also help us better understand what our butter business is netting us margin-wise," she adds. "That's the kind of detail we would like to see and that we will be able to access more easily once HiFlow goes live."

"Another thing that really stood out to me with HiFlow that I didn't see in other packages is their case pack and pallet optimization tool. We were doing that manually, and that tool will help us be much more efficient in the packing and shipping department."

The icing on the cake for Plier was the wide range of online information provided by HiFlow Solutions, including testimonials and mini demos of the software capabilities on YouTube, as well as on-site or remote workshops as needed. These were helpful in creating the SOPs that help make sure the entire Wausau team is on the same page with processes and procedures.

"We looked at a number of solutions before we chose HiFlow," Plier concludes. "HiFlow came out on top in all our analyses. The HiFlow team not only stuck with us every step of the way, but they were proactive in addressing all our issues. I am extremely pleased with the outcome, and the solution has lived up to their promises and our expectations. I believe we are set for the next 30 years to continue this partnership with HiFlow Solutions as we build a more efficient and profitable future!"

Read the complete case study here: <https://hiflowsolutions.com/case-study-folding-carton-manufacturers-wcc/>

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About

[HiFlow Solutions](#) provides MIS / MES production and business management software that helps packaging manufacturers operate more efficiently and profitably. The company delivers a complete range of services including: a leading-edge MIS system; integration with machines services to ensure seamless operations; and consultative services for utilizing technology to drive efficiency, build scale, and improve profitability.

HiFlow offers custom software development services for folding carton, corrugated, flexible packaging, label converters and printing companies. HiFlow Solutions has been providing MIS and MES solutions for more than 24 years to over 116 clients. Its international sales headquarters is located in Miami, Florida.

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