



Article: In Practice

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## **Hunter Manufacturing Company: The Quest for a Strategic Asset Solution**

With ambitious growth plans, Hunter Manufacturing Company, a leading manufacturer of environmental equipment and protective filtration systems, had clearly outgrown its legacy business management system. Hunter executives surprised themselves by choosing an SAP solution to replace it. Today Hunter runs efficiently and profitably on it.manufacturing, a mySAP All-in-One solution for SME industrial manufacturers from itelligence.

Hunter Manufacturing, based in Solon, Ohio, designs and manufactures NBC (nuclear, biological and chemical) air filters and air filtration systems for use in vehicles and shelters. Hunter supplies specifically designed NBC products for use in military and Homeland Security applications. In addition, Hunter designs and builds powered and non-powered heaters for tents, shelters and vehicles with capacities to meet a wide range of field operations requirements.

Since September 11, 2001, Hunter has expanded its focus on support for the Department of Defense and Homeland Securities. The result of this focus presents them with a "hyper growth" situation. It was simply too great a burden on their 15-year-old custom legacy business applications. They needed a new solution to streamline manufacturing processes, manage inventory, and integrate operational data.

### **The journey and the challenge**

To meet its aggressive goals, Hunter began a quest for a solution that would be a strategic asset, enabling them to improve overall operational efficiency and increase profitability. The new solution would replace the older system that had become a liability to Hunter's growth.

Hunter engaged the services of Brulant, a management consulting and technology integration firm, to help guide their quest. The Brulant team stepped Hunter through a thorough business process analysis and helped them evaluate solutions to meet their precise needs.

Considering an SAP solution required a challenging shift in thinking. Initially the idea met with skepticism. However, itelligence's midmarket focus and pre-configured, out-of-the-box it.manufacturing solution appealed to Hunter's senior management. "We had the usual perceptions of SAP: Too big, too complex and too expensive," said Steve Demko, Hunter Manufacturing CFO. "What won us over was itelligence's

approach to midmarket enterprises and its pre-configured solution that makes for a manageable, rapid implementation process."

What they discovered was that the it.manufacturing solution is, as George Droder, Brulant's senior vice president of consulting solutions, says, "a refreshing surprise." Its preconfigured template met 85-90% of Hunter's requirements and paved the way for implementation in just four months. "We selected itelligence based on its record of implementation speed, clarity of vision and its preconfigured solution," continues Droder. "Clearly itelligence's pre-configured solution was key to our decision as it was the tipping point that allowed us to select SAP – the benchmark for business software – for a midmarket company like Hunter."

The mySAP All-in-One solution, it.manufacturing is a complete pre-packaged, industry-specific application that supports the key business processes of any small or midsize manufacturing enterprise. James Keane-Murphy, itelligence Industry Solution Manager, says, "The it.manufacturing solution has been built on years of experience in working with companies like Hunter. It is packed with real-world deliverables."

Today, with its new it.manufacturing solution in place, Hunter operates on fully integrated data and processes. Significantly, they can run mixed mode manufacturing, with everything running in parallel, and with visibility into all processes. The solution facilitates purchasing, inventory, order entry, and delivery processes for the goods and services Hunter provides. It also includes project management capabilities tailored to Hunter's needs, product configuration at the point of order entry, spare parts tracking, real-time reporting, sophisticated profitability analysis, easy system-wide master data entry and changes, and multiple automated postings for payment receipts and billing purposes.

It is far easier today for Hunter executives to make the right decisions to manage work-in-process, shorten cycle times, and lower costs while increasing inventory turns and improving order-to-delivery time.

Transitioning people to the system went smoothly because of the inherent simplicity and ease of use for many of the people who interface with it. For example, nobody misses the old, cumbersome, manual way they had to manage customer service. Now, with visibility into every aspect of the operation, Hunter has improved communication with both customers and suppliers, supported by greatly enhanced inventory accuracy and control.

The new solution provides a solid platform for Hunter in its move from being a product-oriented company to an integrator of different businesses. And it also supports Hunter in its federal government contractor status by providing the secure technology required to guarantee the integrity of its business processes.

### **Victory in the face of disaster**

Implementation was accomplished on time and on budget, even though the Hunter facility's roof collapsed under the weight of a heavy snowfall. The disaster caused a delay, but Hunter kept manufacturing and Brulant and itelligence kept implementing.

“Go live” took place on schedule in early February, with all legacy data integrated and all personnel trained on time. Hunter closed the books in March for February on the new mySAP All-in-One solution, it.manufacturing. It was the victorious end to the quest, and the initiation of a new era.

“Hunter’s decision to choose SAP is now enabling significant business benefits to emerge and accrue. For example, Hunter now has significant visibility into supply chain and procurement information, which paves the way for considerable cost reduction opportunities. Such savings will drive an ROI in less than two years,” says Matt Dierker, Brulant Principal and SAP Program Manager.

We were glad to work hand-in-hand with Hunter and turn technology from frustration into a strategic asset,” says Steve Niesman, itelligence president and CEO. “We look forward to building on our relationship with Hunter, from everyday post “go live” technical support to helping them become an even better company.”