

TYPE
CASE STUDY

INDUSTRY
AUTOMOTIVE

LOCATION
BROOKVILLE, OHIO

GREEN TOKAI STRENGTHENS VISIBILITY, QUALITY, AND INVENTORY WITH REAL-TIME DATA IN PLEX ERP

Founded in 1988, Green Tokai Co. (GTC) is a subsidiary of Tokai Kogyo Co. based in Aichi, Japan. With production and warehouse facilities in Brookville, OH and Maysville, KY, Green Tokai manufactures automotive components including door and window seals, windshield molding, and more. The company works to consistently exceed customer expectations alongside its quality goals, based on the ISO 9001:2015 quality system. Additionally, both GTC plants are ISO 14001:2015 certified.

RESULTS



Enhanced operational agility
and market competitiveness
through digital transformation



Facilitated inventory serialization,
bettering inventory management
through intelligent cycle counts
& location tracking



Increased access to real-time
production reporting



PAPER-BASED AND LOW-TECH

Green Tokai (GTC) began operating in May of 1988—since then, the global company has expanded to include three additional plants in Brookville, OH and one production facility in Maysville, KY. While expanding and making a name for itself in the world of automotive manufacturing, GTC was operating within a low-tech framework, relying predominantly on two software systems alongside excel spreadsheets. Shop-floor activities were conducted manually, with clipboards and paper serving as the primary tools for coordinating the company's work centers. Production reporting was also paper based, leading to delays in data entry within the existing ERP framework.

Additionally, many GTC work centers lacked PC infrastructure, hindering digital integration and access to real-time data. Despite sporadic usage, the ERP system in place primarily served back-office functions, which resulted in a lack of linkage between master data and operational outputs.

Green Tokai also faced several challenges that impacted operations. Limited inventory tracking and management capabilities decreased the company's ability to maintain accurate stock

levels. The lack of real-time data resulted in operational inefficiencies and impacted timely decision-making. Quality tracking was also fragmented, relying on a combination of customer portals and spreadsheets. Manual documentation of quality checks on paper further complicated analysis and retrieval processes, despite meeting basic requirements.

Driven by these challenges, Green Tokai initiated the search for a new ERP system. The company recognized the need for real-time data to enhance visibility and establish a single source of truth across its operations. Moreover, industry trends, including an increase in customer demand for serial traceability and quality tracking, emphasized the urgency for a comprehensive solution that would meet the evolving requirements while simultaneously reducing manual processes.

Ultimately Plex emerged as the preferred choice for Green Tokai's new ERP system after a recommendation from an existing customer. Plex's cost structure and endorsement by a significant industry player made it a compelling solution to address GTC's challenges.



A CAMPAIGN FOR SUCCESS

Successful adoption was a top priority for the entire team throughout the implementation process. To enhance awareness, flyers were distributed extensively before the Plex implementation began and regular weekly meetings with department managers were held to ensure that progress updates were readily available. Hands-on involvement in configuration, design, and training discussions also allowed Green Tokai team members to grasp the benefits of Plex well before implementation began.

Green Tokai's Plex implementation involved multiple departments and individuals across the organization alongside Plex Implementation Partner, Revolution Group. Initially, a core team of approximately six members spearheaded the implementation process before it was extended across all 13 departments, each with designated primary and secondary super users.

These super users were responsible for coordinating departmental activities, conducting training sessions, and ensuring readiness for implementation across all GTC plants.

Team leaders overseeing various work centers also ensured that their operators received adequate training and, post implementation, these operators have demonstrated immense resourcefulness, exploring system functionalities beyond their initial training.

Reflecting on their implementation experience, Green Tokai identified areas they would handle differently when approaching the process again. Looking back, Green Tokai wishes they would have provided more time for shop-floor associates to undergo training. It was anticipated that there would be a company-wide learning curve as the dust settled after the implementation. Even with the learning curve, Green Tokai successfully implemented Plex and went live on June 1, 2023.



The fact that we have real-time data is only starting to reap benefits in other areas. GTC was so used to not having real-time data that we're only now starting to run several subledger reports... to get a better understanding of how to address issues that impact our results.



JOSEPH DANIEL

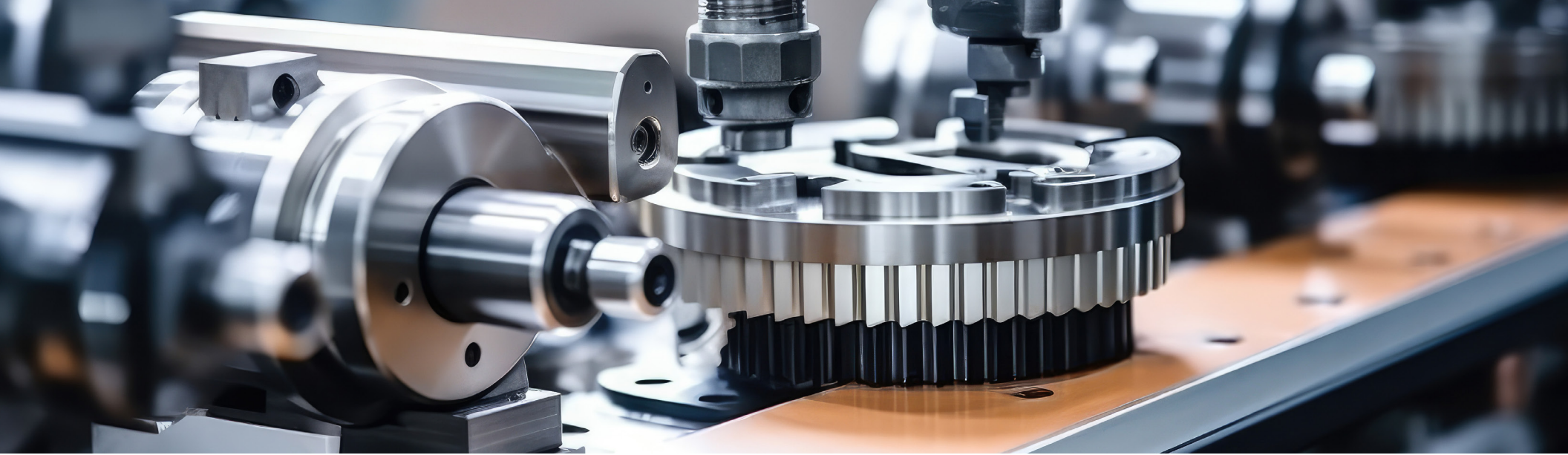
General Manager of ERP & Finance, Green Tokai

IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENTS AND LOOKING AHEAD

The adoption of Plex brought about significant improvements within Green Tokai's operations. The transition itself necessitated an upgrade in infrastructure, which led to an increase in PCs on the shop floor. This not only replaced many of the existing paper-based processes, but it also increased general optics for shop floor associates. The utilization of the Plex Control Panel also enabled Green Tokai's operators to access real-time production reporting, enhancing visibility and allowing for the measurement of operational success metrics such as Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE).

With Plex, GTC has transitioned to a culture of continuous improvement. Increased visibility and traceability have facilitated enhancements based on real-time data, fostering a more proactive approach to problem-solving and allowing for more timely business decisions. The transition from a manual, paper-based system to Plex has empowered GTC to respond promptly to the needs of its suppliers and customers, enhancing operational agility and overall competitiveness in the market.

Additionally, Plex facilitated serialization across all inventory levels, enabling better inventory management through intelligent cycle counts and location tracking. Green Tokai now attaches documents to transactions, providing assurance of transaction accuracy.



As GTC continues to tap into real-time data with Plex, the team has plans to continue discovering their new ERP system's full potential. Green Tokai is eager to implement Plex's Maintenance Module and GTC's Quality Division is seeking new ways to utilize Plex and continue to phase out paper files and Excel documents every day.

Green Tokai recognizes that success with Plex lies not only in the technology itself, but also in the strategic planning and collaborative efforts with team members and a strong third-party like Revolution Group.

"The true benefits of Plex may only become apparent after going live, emphasizing the importance of a long-term vision and diligent testing."

JOSEPH DANIEL

General Manager, ERP & Finance,
Green Tokai

ABOUT PLEX

Plex, by Rockwell Automation, is a leader in cloud-delivered smart manufacturing solutions, empowering the world's manufacturers to make awesome products. Our platform gives manufacturers the ability to connect, automate, track, and analyze every aspect of their business to drive transformation. The Plex Smart Manufacturing Platform™ includes

solutions for manufacturing execution (MES), ERP, quality, supply chain planning and management, asset performance management, production monitoring, process automation and analytics to connect people, systems, machines and supply chains, enabling them to lead with precision, efficiency and agility. To learn more, visit www.plex.com