

▶ Douglas Battery Manufacturing Company

“It’s pretty impressive when auditors come to look at our maintenance data and we’re able to drill down into our system to get the information they need, and more. It totally blows them away.”

— PAUL SHEEHY, DIRECTOR - FACILITIES ENGINEERING, DOUGLAS BATTERY MANUFACTURING COMPANY



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▶ Douglas Battery streamlines maintenance management.

Business Issues

Douglas Battery had been using a paper-generated index card system for preventative maintenance (PM) efforts. Now, with a plant-wide automated system for Enterprise Asset Management (EAM), the company has been able to increase efficiency and add to its bottom line. Complete work orders and facility maintenance records allow users to check the repair and maintenance history of equipment and spare parts inventory. Plus, quick access to information allows for more informed decisions, which adds to overall corporate performance and leverages enterprise data to keep asset management processes running efficiently.

The Company

For more than 80 years, Douglas Battery has been manufacturing and delivering quality battery products. The company has grown from a small family business producing only 15 batteries a day, to a large, privately-held family business with over 800 employees.

Its almost 300,000 square-foot manufacturing facility, headquartered in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, produces close to 4,000,000 batteries annually, positioning the company as the fifth largest lead/acid battery producer in the U.S. Douglas Battery has achieved ISO-9001 and QS-9000 certification for all facilities. It is currently poised to be TS16949 certified in the near future.

The company has two divisions, automotive and industrial. Customers include OEMs such as BMW® and JLG® Industries, as well as the huge automotive aftermarket distribution channels.

company	Douglas Battery Manufacturing Company
solution.....	Enterprise Resource Planning
product.....	SSA EAM (Enterprise Asset Management)
platform.....	IBM iSeries® (AS/400®)
industry.....	High-tech and electronics
customer revenue.....	\$150M
number of employees.....	800
country.....	U.S.A.

What's Critical

Prior to implementing an EAM solution, maintenance instructions for Douglas Battery's PM program were mainly paper-based. The company was using an index card system that was photocopied and distributed to the appropriate mechanics. However, there was no way to review records on completed repairs or the upcoming maintenance schedule. Plus, maintenance records could not be analyzed over a set period of time. This created problems in justifying repair costs since the company was experiencing unexplained high maintenance costs that were growing each year.

Moreover, in addition to stiff competition from companies such as Exide® and Johnson Controls®, Douglas Battery competes against many foreign battery manufacturers that have much lower labor costs and virtually no environmental regulations. U.S. industrial plant regulations are some of the most stringent in the world for air and water discharges, requiring the installation and maintenance of large environmental safety equipment to filter and monitor air and water quality at these plants.

Although everyone agrees that these are necessary regulations, the added costs to maintain this equipment raises the overall maintenance budget for these facilities. Effective EAM becomes crucial to balancing these with other costs, including labor. Paul Sheehy, Director of Facilities Engineering for Douglas Battery says, “We were constantly being questioned about the number of maintenance people we had. The system helped us to be more efficient, but also helped me to justify the number of people in my department because we could easily demonstrate exactly what work was being performed.”

Finding the Right Solution

Douglas Battery implemented an SSA Global™ EAM (SSA EAM) solution to resolve its maintenance management issues. Within six months, Douglas Battery had converted its index card system to an automated preventative maintenance (PM) program, brought its in-house parts inventory system online, and began using work orders to capture all corrective action efforts. Today the company uses Version 8.1 for the increased functionality, updated features and easier navigation.

► solution improves efficiency, productivity and profitability.

Currently, Douglas Battery is maintaining and tracking more than 5,000 capital assets using the SSA EAM solution on an IBM eServer® iSeries (AS/400) platform. The solution is scalable to accommodate expanding needs; to which Sheehy says, “the system’s so large, I’ll never outgrow it.”

According to Sheehy, Douglas Battery chose the SSA Global EAM solution because “we hadn’t run into a package that had as much functionality or as much to offer in maintenance management tools. It’s a system that was written specifically for equipment maintenance, and the purchasing system is one of the best around.”

Implementing Fast

Douglas Battery implemented its EAM solution with a team of three in-house people. The PM program was implemented first since the company had a working paper system that was easy to convert and allowed employees to see the benefits of the new system. The work order and parts systems were added next. All of this was up and running in less than one year.

Maintenance supervisors, managers and administrators have found the system to be readily accessible and easy to use. When a machine breaks down, all records are easily accessed to determine repair history. This ability drastically reduces machine downtime and increases efficiency. “It is a great road map or reference to guide employees who get into unfamiliar territory,” says Sheehy.

More importantly, the system increases the efficiency of all users and determines accountability for performance. “The package allows us to maintain the facility with less maintenance personnel, yet our plant output is double what it was when we first implemented,” says Sheehy. “We track maintenance throughput per employee, and that accountability alone helps boost our productivity.”

Making it Pay

Inventory Reductions. With SSA Global, Douglas Battery was able to reduce parts inventory by 48%, simply by identifying low use or no use parts in stock. Many of the parts discarded were for old machines that were no longer in use. The system helped identify these parts which brought the parts inventory cost down from \$1.3M to \$680,000. According to Sheehy, “We’re much more aware of what is going on and where our maintenance dollars are going.”

Business Process Improvements. Using a combination of system reporting capabilities and self-designed queries, Douglas Battery is able to effectively use the system to develop important monthly reports highlighting only the information needed. All information is compiled into one document and distributed to the appropriate recipients in a timely manner. As a result, the company is now

able to justify costs, keep better records, quickly access more information, and improve upon its maintenance efforts. Says Sheehy, “It all comes down to time and cost savings. I simply don’t want to stock parts I don’t need, or do unnecessary inspections. The system ties the equipment to the parts very well.”

Operational Efficiency. The PM module also helps in utilizing predictive maintenance technologies which identifies problems prior to machine breakdowns. “Our main goal as managers,” says Sheehy, “is to use the system to help prevent problems from occurring.”

Forward Faster™ – Into the Future

Moving forward, Douglas Battery plans to continue using the system to maintain its facilities management initiatives. The company intends to keep refining and customizing its implementation to provide the highest possible equipment reliability and the lowest maintenance costs for its enterprise. Keeping tight control over maintenance management costs will help in competing on a global scale.

With the SSA Global system, Sheehy plans “to keep improving plant-wide effectiveness for manufacturing. The more successes the maintenance department has in being effective and timely in its repairs, the more manufacturing will benefit from our efforts.”

about SSA Global

SSA Global™ is a leading provider of extended enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions for manufacturing, services, and public organizations worldwide. In addition to core ERP applications, SSA Global offers a full range of integrated extended solutions including corporate performance management, customer relationship management, supply chain management and supplier relationship management. Headquartered in Chicago, SSA Global has 121 worldwide offices serving more than 16,000 customers that represent market-leading companies in over 90 countries. For additional information, visit the SSA Global web site at www.ssaglobal.com.



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