ASK *POWER*

Your best connector option.

ASK Power Improves On-Time Delivery to 99% with DemandCaster

"With DemandCaster, our profit margin went from 2 to over 10 percent, our on-time performance to 99 percent, and our lead time from five to six weeks down to two to three weeks."

Steve Kase, President and CEO

About ASK Power

ASK Power is an Aurora, IL-based manufacturer of electrical power connectors for the transportation, military, telecommunications, and OEM markets. With more than 50 years of tool design and applications engineering, ASK Power also provides design, development, tooling, and production for entire product lines, gauge ranges, and prototyping.

Challenges and Needs:

✓ The company's ERP/MRP system worked well but couldn't provide the flexibility of detailed capacity planning or sales and operational planning (S&OP) the company needed to remain competitive.

✓ Monthly manual forecasting done on spreadsheets was time-consuming, out of date, and inaccurate.

✓ The company could not get detailed shop floor control through visual finite capacity planning for a realistic snapshot of work center loading, late jobs, lead times, or inventory.

✓ Unable to provide a high level of service to the company's top 100 customers without stocking inventory—raw material from overseas required a two to three-month lead time; but, customer lead time was less than a month.

Solution Benefits:

✓ Delivered 99 percent on-time performance for eleven out of twelve months in 2016.

✓ Went from two to three inventory turns to as many as six annually.

✓ Reduced order lead time from five to six weeks, down to two to three weeks.

✓ Increased profit margin from 2 to over 10 percent.

DemandCaster

"On-time delivery is an important focus for us. In fact, a customer recently told me that four or five years ago we were not meeting expectations from a delivery point of view, and now we are exceeding expectations. I can point directly to DemandCaster for that."

Steve Kase
President and CEO

In 2009, ASK Power took advantage of an opportunity to fill a gap left by one of its competitors—nearly doubling in size. As a result, the company began to struggle to maintain its on-time delivery and lead times, and project costing also started to rise. The company's CEO realized that he couldn't accurately calculate capacity planning to get a clear picture of how production could be optimized to meet the increased demand.

Gaining a Realistic View of the Business

"We could produce work orders and identify machines and the work centers involved with those work orders," said Steve Kase, ASK Power CEO. "But we wanted to see if we're overloaded on specific days on specific machines so we could move an order from one machine to another and regenerate the capacity."

Kase discovered that very few systems can do that as well as DemandCaster's capacity planning functionality; so, he decided to add it onto his company's ERP system. Using DemandCaster, ASK Power can get detailed shop floor control with visual capacity planning that forecasts

45 or 60 days out, and regenerate planning according to the company's machine layout on an as-needed basis. Daily updates from the ERP/MRP are automatically fed into DemandCaster for an updated, more accurate demand and supply plan.
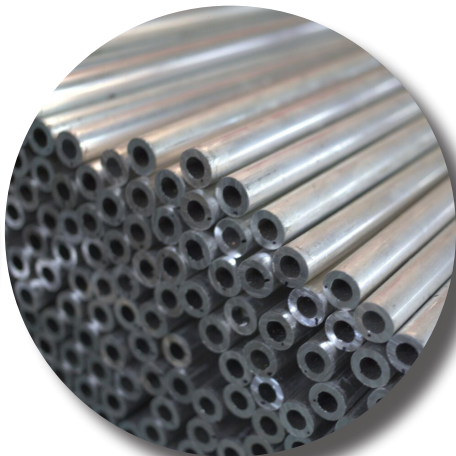
"What is important to us is the ability to reflect our capacity and work center realities. Both infinite and finite capacity planning are really necessary to be able to ensure that you're on top. We couldn't find that anywhere but DemandCaster," said Kase.

Delivering High Levels of Service—with Optimum Inventory

Another key area Kase wanted to improve on was sales and operations planning to stay competitive. Since ASK Power serves a variety of markets, it became difficult to serve these markets at a high level without building up stock. Each month the company would compile spreadsheets to determine optimum inventory levels but soon realized this was not accurate, or sustainable.

With DemandCaster's Sales and Operations Planning (S&OP) module, the company collects sales and order data from its ERP system and develops forecasts based on segments unique to its business. After reviewing available capacity, inventory, and scheduling, ASK Power can set inventory targets and plan supply accordingly. DemandCaster proved to be an excellent budgeting solution for the company's operations.

"We went from two or three inventory turns to as much as six—and reduced setup waste," said Kase. "The S&OP features from DemandCaster impacted our delivery as well—I had one customer tell me that we went from not meeting their expectations in terms of delivery to exceeding expectations."

Kase added that an unexpected benefit was the ability to merge with a French company and get it up to speed on the solution within 30 days, even after adding a new production facility for both planning and execution.

"This facility produces over two thousand SKUs and once we converted our ERP/MRP system to reflect those part numbers and their demand and history, we immediately were able to use DemandCaster S&OP to understand what kind of reordering practices we needed, and that was a nice surprise."

Operating More Efficiently—and Profitably

Kase will tell you that his business almost doubled in revenue between 2008 and 2015 with half the employees. In those seven years, the company has worked hard to eliminate waste, reduce costs, and automate many of its processes. But Kase can directly attribute his company's ability to provide good service, shorter lead times, sales growth, and effectively manage inventory to DemandCaster.

"If you're not doing S&OP, you've got problems. But, if you want to do it well and realistically plan for your capacity, you need DemandCaster," said Kase.

"DemandCaster helped us substantially reduce setup waste on the shop floor, resulting in higher profitability and tighter inventory control. We went from two to three inventory turns to as much as five to six turns annually."

Steve Kase
President and CEO

DemandCaster

DemandCaster DemandCaster supply chain planning software empowers organizations around the globe to stay ahead of the unexpected with unprecedented insight and agility. Powerful and intuitive, DemandCaster supports the entire spectrum of supply chain planning in one modular cloud-powered suite. It enables plans to be put into action with the click of a button and removes the barriers that keep planners from doing their best work. With DemandCaster, agile supply chain planning becomes a reality and turns your planning process into a continuous driver of efficiency, profitability, and growth.

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