

ECiMAX

MANUFACTURING SOFTWARE REVIEW BY SHELDON NEEDLE



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Overview

New ownership

The Dutch software company Exact Group B.V. (Exact) announced in July 2017 that an agreement has been reached to sell Exact's Specialized Solutions division, which includes Macola, JobBOSS and MAX. The division was acquired by ECi Software Solutions Inc. of Fort Worth, TX, under the leadership of ECi management.

MAX (formerly Exact MAX) is an ERP software that delivers full sales, manufacturing and accounting control. It is designed for materials managers, purchasing/order managers and quality control managers who need to automate either discrete driven product manufacturing or linear food batch processing.

Key industries and small to medium-sized companies that MAX serves:

- food processors, medical device, computer & electronics, automotive
- contract manufacturers
- Capital goods manufacturers (especially those who need heavy equipment maintenance record tracking)

With flexible batch processing, part management, and production planning features, MAX is particularly well-adept at fulfilling the needs of contract service providers but can also be successfully deployed in full-service manufacturing facilities. MAX is a business system that can help them manage business processes from order-entry to production planning through to fulfillment.

MAX ships with Microsoft Dynamics Great Plains as its financial management system, or can integrate with your own copy of Great Plains, (saving you money) or can integrate with QuickBooks for those

companies who want a powerful, integrated best of breed MRP system.

Strong compliance, CRM, workflow and full function manufacturing capability

With screens and workflows that are intuitive and user-friendly, mixed with powerful manufacturing functionality, MAX can help you deliver on the commitments you make to your customers. Fully integrated change management allows you to deploy design changes directly to the Bill of Material, as you implement a change from a customer or from your engineering department.

MAX is strong in regulated environments. With full lot and serial control from MAX, you'll be able to maintain the level of traceability required by agencies like the FDA, streamlining your role in recalls and providing your customers with the assurance that your processes are sound.

MAX also maintains an open architecture that allows you to integrate with smart machines on the shop floor. This streamlines your man-machine interface and results in fewer human errors and provides real-time inventory updates that you can share with your customers and suppliers.

MES Announcement – January 2018

January 30, 2018 – Aegis Software, a global provider of Manufacturing Execution Software (MES) and MAX, a leading Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software solution for small and medium-sized discrete manufacturers, have teamed up to provide an integrated solution. This complementary combination will help manufacturers become more agile and responsive to customized and changing demands, ultimately increasing operational efficiency and elevating customer experience and satisfaction.

The partnership combines two best-in-class solutions. The MAX ERP solution manages the business functions such as purchasing, material planning, sales, and inventory management to help

an enterprise run smoothly. Users can now add the functionality of the MES platform from Aegis, FactoryLogix®, which manages the manufacturing production lifecycle: from product launch to material logistics, through manufacturing execution, ensuring that production is in line with demands. This powerful combination can lead to significant improvements such as increasing overall equipment efficiency, improving inventory accuracy and demand forecasting, reducing cycle times, ensuring compliance, and boosting profit margins.

Technology

MAX is a fully MS SQL product offering MS Reporting Services to enhance queries and custom reporting.

An unusual feature is the ability to create new query tabs for information tracking for various master files (e.g. inventory parts) where you can define aspects of the information similar to what is done in a full database system such as field length, type of data, etc. Multiple fields can be created for each tab. This facility is designed such that it does not touch source code and is fully upward compatible with new releases of MAX.

MAX is strong for dashboards and Excel Pivot Tables and comes with starter templates for each. It also offers integration with Outlook for appointment tracking.

Event Manager is an application for creating alerts and notifications for using defined workflows

Key MAX Features

Primary modules include:

Bill of Materials

A cornerstone of the MAX system, Bill of Materials features screens and reports that enable you to build and maintain your BOMs in one visual workspace with all relevant information at your fingertips. This module also maintains important part information and enables you to review product structure from the top down or bottom up.

Lot/Serial Control

MAX captures lot, serial, and expiration date when inventory, shop floor or repetitive transactions are completed. The data is collected and stored in a format so that the "as-built" configuration can be searched and displayed using either a single level or multi-level implosion or explosion. A user can drill down through a multi-level of a Bill of Materials and view all the lot, serial and expiration date that went into building that product. Or the user can perform a multi-level implosion to view where each component was used or stocked. MAX Lot/Serial Control provides a fast and accurate method to track and display product configuration...which is vital in the event the data needs to be urgently presented (such as during a product recall or audit).

ECO Management

Engineering Change Order (ECO) Management facilitates the creation of a framework to manage additions, changes and deletions to your product. This module also manages the tasks and approvals associated with that change outside of the live production environment. As each task is approved or rejected, history is maintained capturing the individual that completed each tasks and when they did it. When all tasks are approved ECO Management will automatically update all impacted areas (Parts, BOMs, Routings, Documents, etc.) in the live production environment. ECO Management allows a company to more effectively manage their change process,

reduce the amount of time it takes to implement changes and reduce the overall cost of incorporating customer suggestions or new features.

CRM and Workflow Management

Synergy for MAX is a powerful tool to help an organization manage the entire front office aspects of doing business. Synergy for MAX incorporates common functions like capturing account data, scheduling activities like calls, appointments and meeting while at the same time provide metrics and statistics used as key performance indicators (KPI's) to help manage the business. As a web based tool, Synergy for MAX goes beyond traditional front office solutions by including a complete portal capability to allow secure access for customers, business partners and remote employees. It provides an enhanced level of integration with the back office, allowing users the capability to enter orders, view order status, and view inventory levels. Additional static data such as shipping information, documents and schedules are also available. Synergy for MAX is configurable and can be customized and adopted to the specific needs of the organization by allowing for the addition or removal of specific fields, customization of workflow and multilingual capability.

Purchasing Control

Purchasing Control lets you create and print purchase orders, track purchased materials, maintain vendor information and predict your cash requirements. You'll know exactly what a part will cost, when you can get it, and from which approved vendors. This module provides information at your fingertips to help you make the most cost-effective decisions and accurately control all your purchasing requirements. With MAX Purchasing Control, you create and print your purchase orders, track purchased materials, and maintain vendor

information and accurate cash requirements. You'll know exactly what a part costs, when you can get it, and from which approved vendors.

Inventory Control

Inventory Control enables you to track and maintain inventory balances for each part you stock, including finished goods, assemblies, component parts and raw materials. With Inventory Control, you'll always know where your inventory is located and how many parts are on hand. This higher level of control and visibility will result in increased inventory turnover and improved inventory accuracy.

Sales Order Processing

Sales Order Processing lets you enter sales orders, ship and invoice product and satisfy customer inquiries. Full integration with other MAX modules allows you to view on-hand balances and customer credit information during the order entry process.

Master Scheduling

Master Scheduling plans production of finished goods, generates forecast orders and maintains customer demand, thereby creating a consistent and realistic production plan that drives all aspects of your manufacturing and purchasing operations. This will enable you to routinely satisfy your company's policies on customer service, production efficiency and inventory management. With Master Scheduling you'll be certain that your plan is based on the best information available and that everyone is working to the same plan.

Material Requirements Planning

Material Requirements Planning (MRP) balances the supply and demand for all component parts

needed to satisfy your Master Schedule. The MRP process performs two essential tasks: Reschedules existing orders to meet changes in the current demand. Initiates new orders (order signals or planned orders), if required, to balance supply with demand. This module also maintains MRP planning data for parts.

Shop Floor Control

Shop Floor Control lets you create shop orders, track work-in-process (WIP), maintain workcenter information and analyze shortages and backlogs. With Shop Floor Control in place, you'll realize increased labor efficiency, better machine utilization, less downtime, reliable capacity planning and predictable overtime scheduling.

Visual Shop Scheduling

Managing production schedules manually costs time and money and can result in poor material flow on the shop floor. The MAX Visual Shop Scheduler helps you further leverage your investment in MAX by introducing the ability to manage your production schedules through a graphical user interface. Planners and schedulers can manipulate the production plan from their desktop, making it possible to evaluate and apply real-world work center conditions without leaving MAX.

Costing

MAX supports standard costing, weighted average and last cost. Costing enables you to track cost variances for material costs, labor costs and purchase costs by part, order number, or by workcenter. Accountants and auditors can see the full range of reports and inquiries offered to analyze cost performance by comparing actual costs with planned costs. You can control your company's costs and performance by knowing exactly how much material and labor every order, part and operation consumes.

Other Features

MAX features additional modules that can be deployed to manage quoting and estimating processes, labor, sub-contract relationships, and even lean and repetitive manufacturing production processes.

Pros and Cons

Pros

- Good for companies with compliance and quality requirements including FDA, ISO, GMP and others.
- Good for recipe batch manufacturing.
- Integrates with strong financial systems: Microsoft Dynamics GP, and also with Quickbooks for smaller, growing clients
- Easy to learn and use. Very scalable.
- Strong MRP solution
- Well integrated CRM, customer service and portals with web-enabled Synergy for MAX module (with added cost per user)
- Fully MS SQL. Good reporting & analytics tools as well as triggers and alerts.

Cons

- Does not support FIFO or LIFO costing
- Does not support true multiplant MRP when making the same item at multiple plants. (does, however, have multi-plant viewing tools for inventory and exception messages)
- Not an ideal solution for engineer to order or job shops that requires actual or project costing
- Requires duplicate sets of files for customers and vendors when using Great Plains or Quickbooks (but is fully synchronized)
- Project management only available through Synergy for MAX or the Great Plains Financial modules.

About Sheldon Needle



A former CFO, consultant and software designer, Sheldon Needle has authored or co-authored more than 20 books on software selection and has contributed articles to major

publications, including the Journal of Accountancy and Nation's Business. CTSGuides.com has the distinction of being the very first company to do hands-on, independent evaluations of ERP software for the middle market.

Sheldon speaks with business owners and managers every day about software selection and makes personalized recommendations based on their needs and budget. He is widely known and respected throughout the business software community for his independence, integrity and expertise.

As part of registering for our free software selection kit, you receive a 15-minute consult with Sheldon. Sheldon understands financial and business issues and speaks your language.

He knows the leading software companies—how they compare, their strengths and weaknesses, where they fit into the market and which ones would be suitable for your business.