

Tensar

A case study for learning better maintenance practices

ATLANTA, GA – Tensar Corp, a subsidiary of Atlantec International, is a major manufacturer of preventive soil erosion geogrid systems and other similar mesh-type products made from plastic resins. Growing demand for their products and services put additional pressure on operations to produce more with an increasing eye on quality. The maintenance department needed to do their part to meet these stringent demands.

Company Background

Having a 24/7 operation puts a lot of pressure on any maintenance department. Equipment needs to be reliable and ready to work at all times. Without adequate tools to do the job, the maintenance department was always playing catch up trying to get everything done. Bill Curtis, Maintenance Manager reflected, “We needed a system that would support change. Scheduling, Work Orders, Inventory, PM’s and pretty well everything else needed some level of overhaul if we would ever stand a chance at getting ahead of the work”.

The Challenge

Looking back in time to when Tensar was still doing all maintenance administration processes manually, work orders were frequently written on pieces of paper or in some cases issued verbally, schedules were a luxury and inventory availability was unpredictable and rarely known. “Without the proper information, tools or parts, we wasted a lot of time. PM’s were virtually nonexistent. Feedback from the floor was intermittent at best. We didn’t have a good handle on what was being done or how much it was really costing us”, explained Curtis. Further review showed the absence of reporting on work done resulted in uncontrolled repairs of reoccurring problems. Lack of information prohibited any form of root cause analysis, subsequently leading Tensar to throw good money after bad. Inventory was another core area that needed attention. Work scheduled could not be completed because the parts could not be found. “We knew the parts were someplace but finding them was another story”, said Dave Daugherty, the person responsible for Inventory Management and Control.

“Alternatively, we’d have too much inventory of parts or supplies we rarely used”. Daugherty went on to say, “Physical counts were pushed off until the last minute and only got done once a year. It took 2 people 6 weeks to complete and by the following month we knew the figures were off again”.

“We can now see what’s happening on the shop floor”

The Solution

Tensar looked at several CMMS/EAM applications before choosing Directline from Megamation Systems. “We had been looking at several better-known applications before we looked at Directline”, recounted Curtis. “But once we looked at Directline, we knew it had the functionality to keep it on the list. As we moved further in the selection process, we had a pretty good idea that Directline was exactly what we needed. The fact that it was a service and not just an application sealed its fate”. Bill was referring to the comprehensive service offering surrounding the Directline application. Megamation offers an online hosted solution, which includes the application, all the administration services, hardware, database and 3rd-party support applications such as email, spreadsheets for ad hoc reporting and AutoCAD Viewer. When we compared the pricing model of Directline to the other applications, it was clear that Megamation had an advantage over the rest.

“With other solutions, we needed cash up front for licenses and the infrastructure to support these applications. We also needed to budget for the implementation, training, modification costs, technical support, and regular maintenance as well as our own internal IT resource costs”, said Curtis. “But because Directline is a comprehensive service that includes all of these components in their monthly subscription fee, we were able to get more than we thought we could afford. The only thing we really needed from our own IT group was access through our firewall”. “The training process worked to our advantage as well. Rather than sending our people offsite for a couple of days, the Directline training was done over the internet. It was a personalized program that we were able to do a couple of hours at a time without interfering in our daily operations”. Within a month of starting the project, Tensar was using Directline to schedule work more efficiently and build work orders that not only had all the information their maintenance people needed, but because the inventory is part of the system, they are now able to ensure that the parts are available and the technicians know exactly where to find them. “Having the right information at the right time has allowed us to do more with what we already have. Information is flowing both ways. Maintenance people are now able to automatically report on what was done, what equipment was affected and what parts were used in the process”. This information is invaluable for analyzing the health of the facilities and all its assets; allowing Bill and his team to make sound decisions on whether or not to repair or replace assets based on reoccurring costs. “We can now see what’s really happening on the shop floor and can make decisions based on our observations that are proving to save us money”. Tensar continues to take advantage of the Inventory module to better manage inventory in all its stores. Directline has given us the tools to catalog and report on over 3000 stock items across multiple stores”, said

- Some of the Key Benefits for Tensar**
- ▶ **More accurate work scheduling**
 - ▶ **Better information delivered to people doing the work**
 - ▶ **Access to the system from remote locations with notifications tied to email providing 24/7 access**
 - ▶ **Enhanced reporting of work resulting in improved decision making of future work**
 - ▶ **Reductions in inventory redundancies and costs**
 - ▶ **More efficient use of time and materials**

Daugherty. “Work orders create demand on the inventory and issues are automatically recorded. For those parts that we have flagged for automatic reorder, the system takes care of the rest”. Dave continued, “Having the information to make proper decisions on inventory and being able to predict what parts are going to be used, gives us the ability to reduce inventory cost substantially”.

Dave has been able to change physical counting processes and frequencies to take advantage of the automated processes found in Directline. “We’re now doing frequent Cycle Counting and it’s only taking 35-45 minutes a week. In addition to knowing what we have

and where it is, we also know how much it costs and where we got it”. Using this information means that Tensar has much better control over their entire inventory and can now work toward reducing inventory costs further while still maintaining appropriate levels to meet work order requirements. Being able to change the way work is done is one thing. Being able to analyze the results of change and how it affects the bottom line is another. Directline’s built-in report writer is providing management with information that is helping them to assess and evaluate maintenance and inventory operations in an effort to achieve peak performance through continuous improvement. “We’ve done a lot thanks to Directline but we still have a lot to do”, concluded Curtis.

“But with the help of Directline and the account management team at Megamation, we can finally

see the light

DirectLine is a world-class online CMMS/EAM service offered globally through an all-encompassing monthly subscription. With hundreds of customers throughout North America and Europe of various sizes and industries, DirectLine continues to benefit a broad range of maintenance

Please contact us with any questions
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