

Benchmade Knife Sharpens Operations with SYSPRO Software

SYSPRO provided the ability to track multiple orders in the shop at various stages of completion, ensuring a consistent manufacturing flow. It also added the capability to schedule and track jobs, thereby enabling Benchmade to accommodate orders it might not otherwise have been able to.



■ The Company

For nearly 25 years, Benchmade Knife Company has been committed to designing and manufacturing world-class sports cutlery and edged tools. Utilizing premium materials, the latest in product innovations and precision manufacturing, Benchmade is dedicated to producing products that military personnel, public safety officers and outdoor enthusiasts around the globe depend on.

Benchmade is based in Oregon City, Oregon, and produces a product range from basic cutting tools to a professional grade rescue hook, used to perform a quick cut in an emergency situation. Benchmade prides itself on “breaking of new ground in the manufactured knife market” by using a combination of non-traditional materials and modern production methods.

“Our current software packages could only count money and tell us how many finished knives we had in the warehouse; that was about it.”

- Dave Starkey
IT Manager, Benchmade Knife Co.

The company’s Designer Series, which was first introduced in 1991, featured several custom designs. By tapping into the custom knife maker’s knowledge and combining it with manufacturing expertise, Benchmade was able to offer more contemporary knife designs and innovations to knife users.

Benchmade manufactures knives for a loyal and ever growing following of knife users around the globe. The company’s commitment to world-class quality is embodied in its well-known motto – “It’s Not a Knife. It’s a Benchmade.”

Benchmade currently occupies its own 35,000 sq. ft. building which houses all manufacturing and business operations. The company produces about 130 models of knives, which are distributed globally to cutlery shops, sporting goods retailers, police departments and the military through a network of sales representatives, distributors and dealers. Each year about one third of the models are replaced by newer ones.

■ AT A GLANCE ■

COMPANY

Benchmade Knife Co, Inc.

INDUSTRY

Cutlery Manufacturing

THE CHALLENGE

- 100% annual growth
- Functional limitations
- Short view of inventory
- Inadequate access to financials
- Weaknesses in planning capabilities
- Insufficient cost-tracking

SOLUTION & SERVICES

- Fully integrated ERP
- SYSPRO e.net solutions
- Rapid 6-month implementation
- Updated business processes
- Versatile, Lean-enabling system
- Budget-friendly solution

THE BENEFITS

- Clear visibility into inventory
- Accuracy in scheduling
- Consistency in manufacturing process
- Reliable financial data
- Improved customer service
- Increased overall efficiency





■ **The Challenge**

As the Benchmade product line grew, so did the company’s operational and software needs.

Benchmade began to acquire new machines and technologies, including the first of several laser marking units, making Benchmade the first knife manufacturer to have such equipment in-house.

Benchmade, however, had been using software designed for distribution and not much else. Benchmade’s Information Technologies team at the time saw the need for an integrated on-line, real-time software solution to handle the financials, manufacturing operations, inventory tracking and also assist in planning, among other expense-reduction functions. He knew that without an effective ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) solution the company could not otherwise sustain its near annual growth rate of 100% and high standards of quality.

Benchmade looked at a number of systems, each of which “looked good on paper, but failed to produce the promised functionality.” Starkey explains: “I wanted something that worked now and provided the scalability the company’s growth would demand.”

Starkey discovered SYSPRO software at a trade show and after thorough testing, decided it was the “quality tool for Benchmade...The system actually performed as promised,” he says. He also appreciated the fact that the system offered a selection of integrated modules, providing the company with the opportunity to implement new software in stages over 6-months.

■ **The Result**

With all modules functional, operational efficiency jumped at Benchmade. Jason Bills, Benchmade’s IT Manager, explains, “SYSPRO gives us the ability to track multiple orders in the shop at various stages of completion, so we have consistent manufacturing flow. It gives us the capability to schedule and track jobs, thereby enabling us to accommodate orders we might not otherwise be able to. By knowing inventory on hand, we can determine our ability to meet a customer’s required delivery date, helping to improve customer service and satisfaction. We can also adjust inventory levels with sales orders and track inventory costs.”

Several years after the 2006 installation of SYSPRO ERP, the company is still discovering functions of the software, such as automatic queue dispatch and the automatic generation of back order release reports.

The SYSPRO ERP solution continues to meet the needs of Benchmade, even as revenues have increased. “Being a growing company, we bring in new workers and managers, who bring their own way of doing things with them. The advantage comes when you can efficiently and effectively add to these skill sets by training these individuals to utilize the tools you’ve got. While there is no system that fits everybody, with SYSPRO we have the advantage of a flexible, easy-to-use system, the utilization of which new personnel can quickly become proficient. As you know, “Time is Money,” concluded Bills.

When Benchmade was recently faced with moving their retail outlet to a larger facility, the company selected the SYSPRO POS (Point of Sale) system to enhance retail fulfillment capabilities. SYSPRO POS was installed, implemented and up and running within four days- in time for the company’s 2012 annual employee sale. From their brick and mortar re-



tail outlet, Benchmade can now fulfill existing reseller and customer orders, gain visibility into existing customer orders and have the ability to effectively sell in a retail environment, accepting both cash and credit cards.

Bills noted, "What is great about the system is the security of POS users. Security is managed from within SYSPRO, giving Benchmade the ability to control, by user, who can view or move warehouse inventory." He concluded by stating, "The SYSPRO POS system has a simple point and click interface. Our ability to fulfill orders from all channels independently of our retail outlet has enhanced customer service levels. Existing Benchmade customers can walk into our retail outlet and order new product, check existing orders and

be fulfilled onsite or through one of Benchmade's distribution warehouses. The same goes for walk-in B2C customers paying cash or credit card. As an added bonus, employees wanting to take advantage of employee discounts can buy direct from their retail outlets. Everything is controlled and managed within the SYSPRO system."

Benchmade Knife Company is planning to utilize the SYSPRO POS as an offline branch at industry trade shows, which will give the company the ability to sell products to the public at their trade show booths, fulfill new orders on-line in real-time and check the status of existing orders.