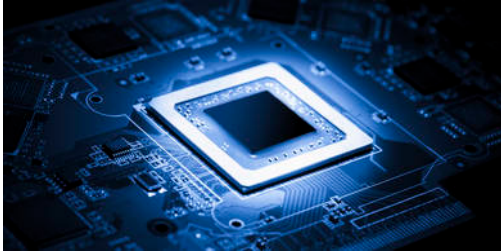




Customer Profile

Sypris Electronics improves accuracy and efficiency with Infor PLM Discrete



Facts at a glance

Product: Infor PLM Discrete

Industry: Aerospace and defense

Country: USA

"Infor PLM Discrete has changed the way we do business for the better, eliminating many manual processes, providing stringent document control, and facilitating greater visibility to the production floor."

**—Joan Fuhremann,
Senior Business Analyst,
Sypris Electronics**

About the company

A subsidiary of Sypris Solutions, Inc., Sypris Electronics is a leading provider of electronics manufacturing and engineering services for government agencies, the US Department of Defense, the avionics and aerospace community, and defense prime contractors. As a strategic partner for highly complex electronics manufacturing, Sypris specializes in high-mix, low-to-medium-volume programs. The company delivers a full range of customized design, manufacturing, and testing services that address the demanding requirements of modern electronics systems, subsystems, and complex circuit card assemblies. For more information, go to: www.sypris.com/sypris-electronics.

Setting the strategy

Sypris Electronics needed to communicate with customers and suppliers electronically so it could achieve operational efficiency while meeting requirements to maintain security of the sensitive defense-related information that plays a major role in its business. That meant implementing a new electronic communications solution to replace processes that involved manually copying and shipping information on CDs or distributing information via insecure modems or file transfer protocol (FTP).

"Because we do a lot of build-to-order project work for the government and defense prime contractors, it was essential that we implement a document management solution that delivered both efficiency and security," explains Joan Fuhremann, senior business analyst, Sypris Electronics. "The environment we had in place was too dependent on individual user capabilities and their detailed knowledge of multiple government requirements."

One of the prime compliance requirements driving Sypris to upgrade its system was the International Traffic in Arms Regulation (ITAR), a set of United States government regulations that authorizes tight control over the export and import of defense-related material and services. For Sypris Electronics, the regulation requires that it ensure only US citizens view the product-related documents that are used internally and in collaboration with suppliers and customers.

"With ITAR, we needed a system that would be easy for our employees to use and comply with the law," Fuhremann says. "But our need to adopt new, more efficient processes went deeper than that. Our employees were doing a lot of manual review of documents and, in some instances, even re-entering data that we had received electronically from customers."

Getting business specific

As a long-time user of Infor™ ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) and product data management solutions, Sypris Electronics looked first to Infor's product lifecycle management (PLM) solution, Infor PLM Discrete.

"It was a natural progression for us to move to the Infor PLM Discrete solution," says Keith Watson, system administrator for Sypris Electronics. "We were already using an Infor solution for ERP and their product data management solution, so PLM Discrete was clearly the best fit for us."

Within PLM Discrete, the Product Packager module offered the specific functionality that Sypris Electronics needed to upgrade its document management capabilities. Infor PLM Discrete enables Sypris Electronics to take external documents in a wide variety of formats and load them directly into the company's product data management system.

For example, Sypris receives many large bills of materials (BOMs) from its customers. Infor PLM Discrete allows the company to get these documents into its core enterprise systems much faster and with greater accuracy because the information is loaded electronically rather than being re-keyed by a Sypris employee. The import utility within PLM Discrete alerts users to information that already exists as well as information that needs to be created.

"The basic implementation of Product Packager was a very straightforward install and configuration, although we did have requirements to run under SSL (secure sockets layer), which invoked some issues," Watson says, adding that the Infor team was very responsive during the implementation. "At Infor, everybody seems to go the extra mile, so it's been a very good working relationship."

For Sypris Electronics, part of the implementation involved getting employees to embrace the new, more efficient ways of doing their jobs. Infor supported this cultural change with training, both on-site and remote.

Seeing results

"Infor PLM Discrete has changed the way we do business for the better, eliminating many manual processes, providing stringent document control, and facilitating greater visibility to the production floor," Fuhremann says. "With the PLM Discrete solution, we are better positioned to deliver the electronics products and engineering services that meet the demanding requirements of our defense and aerospace customers."

For example, Fuhremann cites the way PLM Discrete has helped Sypris streamline the process for entering BOMs. "We have some very lengthy product structures that we were entering by hand," Fuhremann explains. "It was a very complicated process that often took as much as two weeks. With PLM Discrete, we can now import lengthy BOMs in a matter of hours. In addition to the time savings, we've streamlined revision control and improved the accuracy of the documents because the automated processes eliminate the chance for data-entry errors."

The solution also makes it easier for employees to work with the documents once they are in the company's system. Employees can now download documents and work with them online, rather than going through the time-consuming and expensive steps of getting a paper copy made. "Even though our engineering processes are not quite fully paperless, we're making very good progress," Fuhremann says.

Watson notes that implementing PLM Discrete has provided significant help in meeting Sypris' compliance requirements. "The enhanced document security and the visibility of key operational information made possible by PLM Discrete have helped us meet critical government regulations such as ITAR," Watson says.

Doing business better

Sypris Electronics is focused on expanding the use of Infor PLM Discrete within the organization to eliminate more manual workflows and paper-focused meetings and activities, according to Fuhremann, who cites a near-term focus to get the company's procurement experts to leverage more of the PLM Discrete functionality in their day-to-day jobs.

Over the long term, she's confident of the relationship between Sypris Electronics and Infor. "I've worked with the Infor team for many years and, based on the responsiveness of the team, I think it is safe to say that we will stay with Infor for many years to come."



641 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10011
800-260-2640
infor.com

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