



XEI Scientific Implements Controlled Processes and Improves Profitability in Down Economy

Customer

XEI Scientific, Inc. was founded in 1991 to provide an effective way to gently clean scanning electron microscopes (SEMs) focused ion beams (FIBs) and substrates for fine vacuum coatings.

Challenge/Situation

Like most emerging companies, XEI Scientific had a small staff, heavy workload and limited bandwidth. There was no time to organize product data, leaving it scattered across multiple computers in different formats and in hard copy. Finding data was a time-consuming and cumbersome task without any guarantee that the information was current.

“We knew we were being buried by product information and needed help”, stated Ross Bernheim, production manager for XEI Scientific. “Once I saw Omnify, I realized it could help in dealing with the growing information glut we were generating.”

Customer Goals

XEI was looking for a way to bring order to their product information and instill disciplines to make sure they had a solid product development process in place. XEI also needed a location to store and manage their expansive product documentation such as data sheets, CAD files, PDF files, Bills of Materials (BOMs), Engineering Change Orders (ECOs), schematics, product manuals, etc. so that they could quickly and easily find documents.

The company discovered that a Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) solution would provide the data management capabilities they were looking for. XEI set out to find a product to meet their specific needs as a growing company. XEI wanted an affordable PLM product that would scale as the company grew. “As a small manufacturing business with four employees, PLM software designed for large companies seemed like overkill for us,” stated Mr. Bernheim. “These solutions started at four or five times the cost of Omnify Software.”

Key Benefits

- Time and Cost Savings
 - Reduce time searching for product data from 3 hours to 3 minutes
 - Eliminate rework / faster time to market
 - Significant overhead savings (staff and facilities)
 - Help decrease cost of goods by over 22%
 - Cut compliance certification time by 51%
 - Improve profitability in down economy
- Streamline Product Development Processes
 - Single location to store and manage product data
 - Formal product development processes
 - Ensure data integrity
 - Increase in product quality
 - Easier and more efficient RoHS and NRTL compliance
- Business-ready solution
 - Scalable to grow with XEI (from emerging company to larger enterprise)
 - Affordable (lower cost than competitive products)
 - Easy to use
 - Requires minimal IT and Administrative resources

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CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Omnify Solution

XEI treated moving to Omnify Empower PLM as process rather than a task. Moving their part information into Omnify allowed XEI to easily view all associated data (vendor information, datasheets, PDF files, drawings, and compliance data) in a central location. It has also helped XEI to organize and standardize their part descriptions by allowing them to easily find and correct inconsistencies. “We have expanded this use of Omnify even further by assigning part numbers for documentation such as assembly procedures, test procedures, build checklists, user manuals and software,” continued Mr. Bernheim. “Omnify improves your business operations by providing a central place for data as well as a data framework.”

Managing their BOMs and ECOs within Omnify helps XEI to keep track of changes and who made them. “Having all of the BOMs in one location and with automatic version control helps us keep our documentation up to date and gives us a reliable source to check against,” said Mr. Bernheim.

Support for RoHS and NRTL Compliance Requirements

With over half of their sales overseas, XEI needs to assure the design and manufacture of compliant products. “Certification to various standards is very important in these markets,” commented Bernheim. “Omnify aids in certification by providing the component information needed for the certification as well as formalized support for the processes needed for manufacturing certification and individual product certification.”

During XEI's Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories (NRTL) inspection, the auditor was impressed with how XEI managed approved vendor and parts lists in Omnify as well as BOM Versioning and ECO processes. The auditor was also pleased with XEI's use of Omnify as a document control system for assembly and test procedures, and documentation for customers, such as user manuals and software.

“We have grown from four to seven employees and have seen sustained growth rates of up to 65%. Without Omnify Empower we would need to increase our headcount and our office space to have and maintain the control of information we get using Omnify. With a large drop in business due to the recession, Omnify allowed us to continue to grow and improve profitability by keeping costs and headcount down.”

-Ross Bernheim, Production Manager, XEI Scientific

Return on Investment

Centralizing product information within Omnify improved collaboration and made accessing data a simple process. This environment helped XEI to eliminate errors and costly rework, resulting in the ability to continue to deliver a high quality product to their customers but in less time. “Rework has become virtually a thing of the past as products are built correctly the first time due to the centralized data, versioning control and document management that Omnify Empower provides,” stated Bernheim. “No assuming that the latest BOM is correct, just check Omnify and you are guaranteed to get it right.”

Omnify has helped XEI to reduce the time it takes to find information and assure that they are building to the latest approved documentation. “Previously, the production staff would spend well over three hours trying to find the latest documentation for one of the two types of units that we were building to be able to answer a question about a correct part-and then we had to spend more time searching for the datasheet for that part,” added Mr. Bernheim. “With Omnify Empower the staff can quickly look up the item, open the BOM, drill down to the correct part and open the linked datasheet within a matter of minutes.”

CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Overhead and Time Savings Supports Profitability in Tough Economy

XEI has also realized significant savings in overhead. “We have grown from four to seven employees and have seen sustained growth rates of up to 65%,” stated Mr. Bernheim. “Without Omnify we would need to increase our headcount and office space to have and maintain the control of information we get using Omnify. With a large drop in business due to the recession, Omnify allowed us to continue to grow and improve profitability by keeping costs and headcount down.”

Improved Compliance Processes

“The transition to meet Reduction of Hazardous Substances [RoHS] compliance took a fraction of the time it would have taken without Omnify,” continued Mr. Bernheim. “Since the RoHS information for individual parts was already in Omnify, a simple search against the BOM for a product could show items that were not compliant or needed to be updated for RoHS compliance. This has helped to considerably reduce the costs and time to certification for XEI”.

“Our NRTL certification for manufacturing also went quite smoothly thanks to Omnify,” added Bernheim. “The inspection took less than one day as opposed to the usual two or more, and we only had a single deficiency, an NRTL requirement we were unaware of, which was easily corrected with the help of Omnify.”

Benefits Seen Across the Company

“The entire staff sees the advantages of Omnify on a daily basis as we go about our jobs and don’t have to constantly deal with questions about documentation or parts,” stated Mr. Bernheim. Taking advantage of PLM technology to implement controlled product development processes early on and leveraging a scalable solution to grow with the company has positioned XEI Scientific for continued success.



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