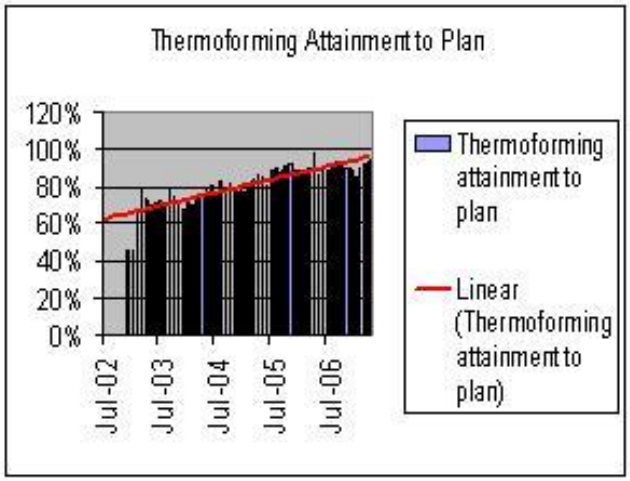
Thermopacking a smart solution with Preactor and SYSPRO

Thermopac, a member of the Rigids Division of the **Astrapak Group** of companies, based in Cape Town, South Africa, specializes in thermoformed plastic packaging. Thermopac operates 24/7 and has over 700 products in the market.

Thermopac's peak season occurs at the end of each year and this requires that Thermopac management carefully manage the allocation of capacity and delivery of customer orders against promised dates.

Although strides had been made in the past to systemize the scheduling and delivery date promising process, the performance had plateaued. Management recognized that they needed to find additional technology if they were to further improve their performance. In addition to this some of the systems that were used in the planning process were not supporting the delivery to promise requirements that customers required.



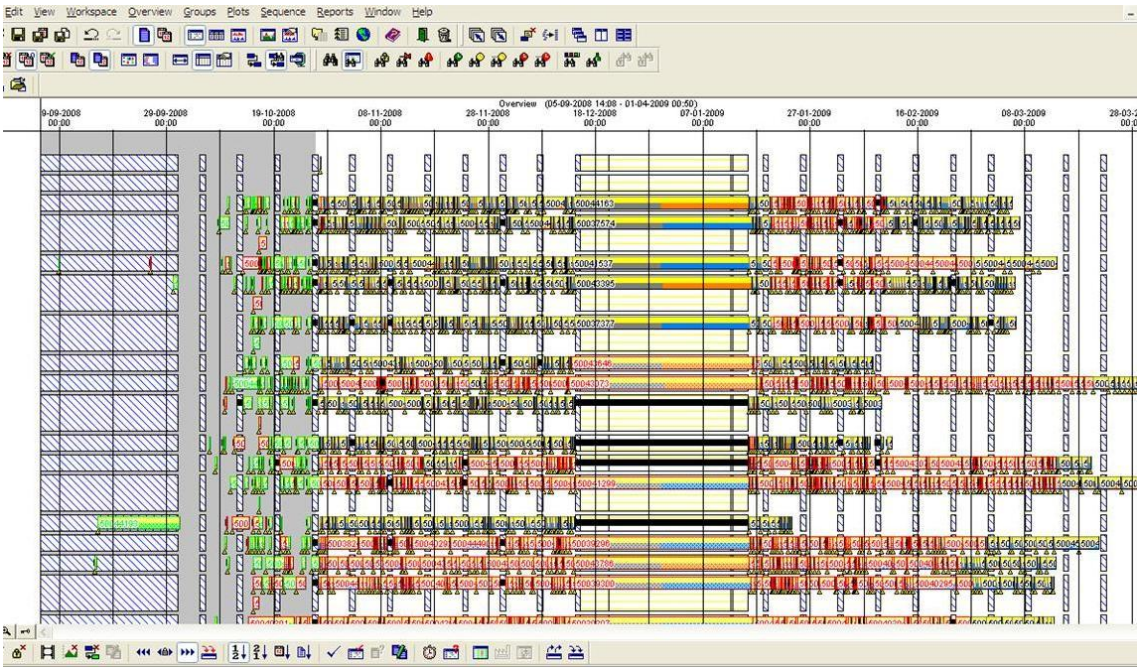
Alan Booth, the Operations Director, recognized that Thermopac needed a solution which would integrated with their SYSPRO ERP system and meet the scheduling and order promising functionality requirements of the business. After reviewing and evaluating Preactor, Thermopac selected a P400 version of the Preactor software to meet their needs.

The Thermopac implementation was completed within two weeks in May 2008, with additional time required to integrate Preactor with other internal systems for reporting purposes.

While the production process comprises of two main processes viz. extrusion and thermoforming, it was decided to develop a schedule for the forming process as the first phase. Thermopac operate with a make-to-order approach. Customer's orders and forecasts are loaded into the SYSPRO system as individual production orders, which are then scheduled against the appropriate resources. This process books capacity for customers in future periods. The planning system needed to optimize change over requirements as the company primarily operates in the shorter custom molded sector of the market.

The visibility provided by Preactor, once production orders have been scheduled, allows Thermopac staff to easily understand what free capacity exists and where capacity constraints are starting to develop, for both situations to be managed.

Forecast orders, if not already firmed up, are confirmed within a rolling three week horizon. When firming up the production for the next week Thermopac run a special rule to sequence production by mould to minimize setups. This information is then also used to run the MRP process.



As a result of implementing Preactor, Thermopac has further improved their customer service levels during the peak season, when compared to previous years.
As a result of the successful implementation of Preactor, work in progress and associated working capital have been reduced as well.

The visibility and accuracy of the schedule has also resulted in improved co-ordination between planning, production and sales groups within Thermopac.

Alan Booth says “I am very pleased with the increased levels of customer service and organizational co-ordination that have been achieved as a result of implementing Preactor. We see further opportunities to improve the management of our resources and customer service levels by implementing the Preactor GMPS functionality during 2009.”

Chris Mollison, the CEO of Scheduling Solutions, the Network Partner for Preactor in Sub-Saharan Africa, says “It is satisfying to see Thermopac further improve their customer service levels and inter-organizational communications via the use of Preactor.”