



**RealSTEEL™**

**NEW RULES OF METALS OPERATIONS:  
How Cloud ERP Delivers  
Data-driven Insights and  
Masters Multi-step Processing**



RealSTEEL's Power Tools for the New Rules Series

## THE NEW RULES OF METALS OPERATIONS:

# How Cloud ERP Delivers Data-driven Insights and Masters Multi-step Processing

The cloud isn't going to change the fundamental operations of your metals business, but it can transform how data flows through your operations to provide visibility and tighten control across your entire organization.

With clear visibility, everyone in your organization can perform their job with precision. Sales people can quote accurately when cloud-based ERP optimizes inventory and scheduling in the background. Shop floor managers can schedule people and machines to reduce overtime and downtime. Machinists can produce more when actual scrap, sheers and break weights are recorded automatically. Production managers can focus on cost controls when jobs are automatically routed, optimizing resources at every step.

With connected data through cloud-based ERP, your organization will have more control of the resources needed to complete the multi-step processing customers expect. And with more complex production workflows, you need an ERP system that will optimize all the inputs—inventory, people and machines—to ensure profitability.

In this eBook, we will explain how cloud-based ERP systems can transform your operations delivering deeper insights and control over multi-step processing.



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## 1

# Deliver decision-driving data to key functions of your operations

Your employees have to make decisions that are critical to profitability and customer satisfaction every day. From purchasing the right amount of inventory to scheduling machine operators, those people can make better decisions if they have complete, current data from all corners of the operation.

## Connect cloud and legacy data sources

Cloud ERP is not all or nothing. That flexibility has important implications for your business data. Many organizations use cloud-based ERP as a bridge to centralize data and augment current software systems. You can integrate data from legacy applications as you “turn on” functionality of the cloud ERP for key operations.

By centralizing data in the cloud, you can take advantage of more powerful reporting across all operations. You can deliver the relevant, real-time reporting your decision makers need to optimize operations with:

- Personalized, role-specific information on inventory, orders, scheduling, shipping and more delivered through user-friendly dashboards.
- Visibility into real-time events on the shop floor, including downtime, operator errors and material problems.
- A full suite of analytic tools that provide insight into details as well as broader trends.



## The cloud opens...



## Modernization where and when you need it

Unlike the big upfront investment of traditional software systems, cloud-based ERP can be a journey. Licensing is paid as a monthly fee based on user count and functionality, so the costs are more manageable and spread out over time. You can prioritize the functions that are most critical to your profitability and implement at your own pace.

# 2 Unify data to manage the complexity of metals processing

Managers need clear visibility into the four components of cost—materials, labor, overhead and outside processing—to optimize operations and maintain profits. As you expand processing services—such as bending, drilling, painting and assembling—it's more difficult to track all the activities associated with those costs. Cloud ERP can provide the platform to transform data into clear, relevant information your managers use to drive the business proactively.

## Optimize inventory and production

With timely, accurate data shared across functions, your organization can place materials orders with precision and optimize production scheduling. Through cloud ERP, you can automate job routing to coordinate the complex matrix of materials and resources required to produce orders within cost and on time. Connected data and processes from sales through shipment allows your managers to:

- Allocate coils at order entry for production planning.
- Route jobs through the production process automatically, optimizing use of resources and allocating appropriate materials at each step.
- Manage outsourced processes, including materials, semi-finished products and finished goods.

## The cloud opens...



## The future of ERP with Microsoft Dynamics 365

Designed to manage financial, operational and sales related business processes, Microsoft Dynamics 365 provides a cloud-based platform to meet the unique needs of each organization. The functionality of Dynamics is compartmentalized into a set of modules that can be combined to fit any business need. Shared data supports all functionality and drives the continuous flow of information and processes across departments, business units and geographies.



# 3 Improve accuracy in forecasting, quoting, scheduling and more

Tracking materials in the metals industry is more complex than most ERP systems can handle. And with dimensional, chemical and physical attributes combining with a range of processing options, the matrix needed for forecasting, pricing and scheduling is more than spreadsheets can handle. Only automation designed specifically for the metals business can provide the instant and dynamic computations needed in today's competitive economy.

## Automation to optimize complex operations

Cloud-based ERP designed for the metals industry will automatically analyze inventory and multi-stage production requirements—including outsourced processing—in the background to optimize all the variables. Through automation, the software will:

- Improve forecasting based on sales history and quoting based on resource availability.
- Build production schedules as orders are placed.
- Record actual production, scrap, sheers, break weights and determine additional cuts and material required due to scrap.
- Automatically route jobs through the production process, optimizing use of resources and allocating appropriate materials at each step.



## The cloud opens...



## The workhorse of Microsoft business analytics

By using a Microsoft-powered cloud ERP, you can deliver visual dashboards with Power BI, Microsoft's intuitive cloud-based business intelligence service to:

- Connect to hundreds of data sources both on premises and in the cloud.
- Use Power Query to simplify data collection, transformation, integration and enrichment.
- Create reports using built-in visuals or create your own custom visuals.

# 4 Streamline shop floor scheduling, including multi-step processing

In addition to the traditional metal business services like slitting, bending and painting, today's customers want to outsource the drilling, painting, bending and assembling of components. To keep production on track and meet promise dates while balancing complex inventory requirements and machine/operator utilization, you need software that collects and analyzes the data to automate scheduling.

## Dynamic scheduling optimizes resources

A cloud-based ERP designed to support multi-step processing will maintain production schedules that dynamically adjust to unexpected changes. With automated scheduling that optimizes utilization of materials, machines, operators and processes you can:

- Calculate materials usage automatically for every job, pinpointing shortages or drops that can be used on other orders.
- Proactively identify the need for alternative resources like outsourced processing.
- Allow operators to directly input actuals data from the shop floor, from material usage to remnants to quality issues.
- Adjust schedules in real time to respond to any change orders or unplanned machine downtime.

## The cloud opens...



## Mixed reality to connect technical expertise across locations

Blending the physical and digital worlds by leveraging virtual and augmented reality, mixed reality allows people separated by space to create, problem solve and collaborate. For example, Dynamics 365 Remote Assist enables on-site technicians to solve problems with the help of remote experts. With HoloLens or Remote Assist mobile, technicians are hands-free while sharing a real-time view of issues.



# 5 Coordinate materials planning with downstream processes

To truly take control of costs along the production process, your metals business needs a system that will ensure the right material is available at the right time. Purchasing agents and production managers need clear visibility into inventory, orders and actual usage to keep material costs from eating away at profits.

## Optimize inventory to meet production

Only a cloud-based ERP system designed to handle the complex attributes of metal inventory can support the automation that drives profits. With timely, accurate data shared across functions, your organization can place materials orders with precision, fully aligned with production scheduling. Automated job routing will optimize the complex matrix of materials and resources required to consistently produce orders. By connecting materials and processing data from sales through shipment, you can:

- Allocate inventory at order entry and automate routing of jobs through the entire production process, utilizing materials and optimizing resources step to step.
- Support digital workstations that allow operators to enter actual materials usage, tracking scrap, sheers and break weights.
- Manage outsourced processes, including materials, semi-finished products and finished goods.



## The cloud opens...



## IoT Preventive Maintenance

The IoT (Internet of Things) is the network of sensors embedded in equipment and machinery that collects data on activity and performance. Through Microsoft Dynamics 365 Connected Field Service, organizations use IoT data to provide proactive service through the combination of diagnostics, scheduling, asset maintenance and inventory management.

# 6 Leverage data to improve performance at every level

Every organization today is collecting huge amounts of data but not all are harnessing it's power. Only centralized data can deliver insights that will drive meaningful improvements.

## Coordinate across departments and geographies

With cloud-based ERP built on shared data, you can use powerful analysis tools working in the background to provide KPI dashboards with relevant real-time feedback to each manager. Help finance predict cash positions with forecasts, AR and DSO all in one place. Allow purchasing to track vendor performance. Give production managers cycle time and run time analyses to address problems. By centralizing data, you can:

- Deliver personalized, role-specific information through user-friendly dashboards.
- Pinpoint downtime, operator errors or material problems on the shop floor.
- Provide analysis tools to dig into data across departments, cost centers, product lines and regions.
- Track actual results against multiple budgets to manage cash flow effectively.

## The cloud opens...



## Process flow driven by Microsoft Power platform

A Microsoft-based cloud ERP system enables your organization to take full advantage of the Microsoft Power Platform, a combination of Power Apps, Power BI and Microsoft Flow. Built on the Microsoft Dataverse, the Power Platform helps businesses drive unique workflows and business processes through “apps” created with a combination of these tools.





## Cloud-based ERP designed for the new age of metals operations

RealSTEEL is cloud-based ERP designed for the unique requirements of the metals industry. The modern, affordable ERP system connects and streamlines quoting, inventory, scheduling...everything. And while RealSTEEL is fully integrated across sales, purchasing, production, inventory management and fulfillment, the cloud provides the flexibility to phase in the functionality you need over time. You can modernize your most important functions first.

RealSTEEL gives you control and insight as orders move through production, delivering relevant data into the hands of managers and operators, through dashboards and machine-based displays. Built on the business intelligence and operations excellence of Microsoft Dynamics 365, RealSTEEL shines with:

- **Accurate costing**, to the decimal, at the moment you need it.
- **Digital workstations** that allow operators to enter actual materials usage, time spent and production variance in real time from the shop floor.
- A **powerful shipping dispatch board** with drag-and-drop load balancing and cumulative tonnage reporting.
- **Inventory tracking and costing** using multiple attributes.
- **A support team** who understands your industry's processes and cares about your business.

**RealSTEEL™**

To learn more about how RealSTEEL can help you build profits, please contact:

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