

# Marine Creations Ltd.

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## Transforming Concepts into Boats

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Re: Empower Time Tracking and Labour Management Software

I have been involved in marine manufacturing for thirty years, during this time I operated my own **factory in Auckland, New Zealand focusing on contract fiberglass manufacturing servicing largely the marine** industry employing at the peak thirty three on the floor staff. Our core business is boat building, plug & mould design & development, and contract fiber glass components. Some of our clients include:

Sensational Yachts,	Team NZ
Rayglass	Alinghy
Aqua Pro	NZ Police
McDell Marine	Oscar Yachts
Salthouse Marine Group	The Yellow water taxis
Barton McGill	Lancer Industries
McConnel Dowel	General Public

From 1988 through the early part of 1990 our time tracking system was the paper based manual time sheet system where factory staff filled in their times on jobs. I found the following limitations with the manual time sheet system

- 1 Staff largely guessed their times on jobs at day end, or the next morning, or worse at the end of the week.
- 2 Staff subconsciously modified times so as they did not look bad, adding excess time to larger jobs
- 3 Time on down time jobs were largely not recorded
- 4 Time spent assisting other staff on jobs were not recorded at all
- 5 Staff would get job numbers mixed up. So the times on two jobs would be substantially wrong and these would usually go unnoticed or require excess office time to sort out the problems
- 6 Being a small business with office time at a premium, manually putting all the times from staff's job cards into our job costs system took many unnecessary hours each week
- 7 We could not achieve any gains in factory productivity when we used time cards that factory staff filled out
- 8 If smaller jobs required invoicing during the week as the owner was due to pick up his boat after completion of the repairs presented the office with the challenge of obtaining immediate hours for the job.

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- 9 Often Saturday morning was spent collating job hours to check the weeks progress against the forecast or contracted hours.
- 10 There was an ongoing need to enforce lunch, smoko durations, start and finish times. Often different lamination and building teams would have breaks at different times. Ten people 6mins late = 1 hour.

To address these Issues outlined above in early1990 we developed our own time tracking program because there was no software available at the time to purchase. I put PCs on the factory floor and everybody clocked into and out of the jobs listed on the screen.

This was a big leap ahead for Marine Creations as:

- 1 The times on jobs were now accurate and live
- 2 Our system was that if you were not clocked in you were not getting paid. Everybody clocked into smoko / lunch / home time.
- 3 Glide time & time off for family needs become easy to handle
- 4 The workers could see their total week hours so far. A lot more people completed their 40 hours
- 5 The supervisor and management could view the screen and see what jobs staff were on
- 6 Our reports were primitive but a big step up from manual time sheets and it gave us the employee hours and job hours live
- 7 A screen in the office allowed staff to immediately invoice and track job progress.

This basic program recorded real time hours, and allowed us to track jobs immediately, obtaining the exact man hours for invoicing small jobs that finished inside the week meaning immediate invoicing prior to collection or delivery of the work.

In the 2002 Sean O'Sullivan from Empower visited our factory and introduced us to Empower Time Tracking. The Empower system was the next step we needed to go to.

The added positives for us in progressing to Empower were:

- 1 Being able to allocate future work with an expected completion hours
- 2 The program being data based meant easy retrieval of past jobs for costing of future jobs
- 3 Good reporting simplified the job of checking the job progress,
- 4 Employees could see their jobs ahead, so there was less wasted time between jobs, no longer were they waiting for the supervisor to allocate them the next job
- 5 The work was completed in the order the production manager wanted leading to production line savings.
- 6 Bonus hours were built into the system leading to good employees working harder and earning more and at the same time ensuring the products were completed within the labour budget.

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Using this system our staff level of 22 factory staff reduced down to 14 - whilst output was maintained. This saved us \$280,000 per year in wage costs. This was a 57% increase in factory productivity.

My advice to all manufacturers in summary is ***“throw away your manual time sheets that staff fill in – simply use PCs on the factory floor and time tracking software as this will allow you to build exactly the same number of boats with substantially less factory staff”***. ***One of the main reasons Empower works is factory staff see on the PC screens both their Budgeted time before they start the job and their Achieved time when they complete the job.***

Being an early user of Empower time tracking software – which is developed locally here in Auckland, I have been involved in the development and trailing new ideas and developments within the program. Empower is a very good system for boat building. Empower has worked very well for me in our boat building business, both on production boats and project boats.

Since 2007 I have operated Marine Creations Ltd as a manufacturing consultancy business based full time in Shanghai China. Our core business is implementing systems and processes into Chinese factories to achieve maximum factory productivity and transparent accountability.

This month we commence a two year project with an American firm setting up to building 47 foot launches based in Tianjin, China. I have strongly recommending to the US owners of the business that they invest in Empower. The direct benefit to the US owners will be the reporting which will be emailed to the head office weekly, as well as the labour savings, information tracking for future projects.

You are welcome to contact me to discuss Empower by phone, skype or e mail.

Yours truly

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