



A CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



LIFTING CNC PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY TO NEW HEIGHTS

When oil or gas basins experience inconsistent production or liquid loading in the wellbore, they can turn to Flowco Production Solutions for artificial lifts. The Houston, TX-based company exists to safely maximize the lifespan and efficiency of oil and gas wells with their high-performance artificial lift products, and have been doing so since 2014. But Flowco had identified a source of waste - and it was happening on their own shop floor.

Flowco, like many manufacturers, has several million dollars' worth of equipment to produce its specially-designed gas and plunger lift solutions. Programmers were tasked with hand-loading programs onto their CNC machinery with a floppy disk or USB, which meant employees were physically going out to equipment to download programs and spending up to two hours a day programming machines while fielding calls, "drop in" visits and requests and other interruptions.

Robert Jackson, a manufacturing engineer at Flowco, oversees programming and had dealt with this type of inefficiency throughout his 40-plus years of experience. At one point in his career, he had worked with a DNC networking software to connect equipment on a network, but found it cumbersome to use.

"I had once worked with a solution developed in the 1990s, but it required hands-on customer support to function and simply lacked the sophistication to work on modern machinery," Jackson said. After online research, Jackson came across Shop Floor Automations (SFA), a manufacturing integrator specializing in hardware and software solutions to increase productivity and profitability. Flowco engaged with the company to set up a network and conduct an initial onsite implementation of the Predator DNC networking solution. Predator securely manages CNC programs, offsets and parameters to allow for the dripfeed, upload and download of DNC programs for CNC machines, robots, CMMs, and PLCs through a single industrial network.

A PHASED APPROACH

"We didn't have a network at the time, so we chose to start with four machines for the first phase of our implementation," explained Jackson. It took two days to set up the network wirelessly.

Flowco then added 12 machines. Six months later, the company had hooked up 11 more machines to the Predator DNC network and are expecting to do the same to five more in the near future as a result of significant growth.

Working with SFA and the Predator solution means Jackson and his staff don't need technical fluency, which he perceives as an added benefit. Jackson recalls, "Our IT had made some changes at one point and our DNC stopped working on 20 machines."

He contacted SFA support and was able to have the issue rectified remotely within three hours. Now Jackson can focus on other priorities, which include spindle monitoring and detecting "trouble spots" in order to gain even greater efficiency on the floor.

"I'm responsible for helping to design high-quality parts and manage all the planning for manufacturing," says Jackson. "Predator DNC gives me the ability to spend my day doing what I'm supposed to be doing."

01

Wireless Network Set Up

Following a preparation checklist, Flowco set up its entire network wirelessly in just two days.

02

Machine Connection to the DNC Network

The company incrementally added machines to its DNC network over a span of months

03

Instant Support

Resolve DNC network issues within hours with an SFA support contract

To learn more about Predator DNC software, contact Shop Floor Automations



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