



# Driving Improvements through Data—and Saving \$1.4M in Less than a Year

CASE STUDY: Mitotec Precision

## Company Overview

Mitotec Precision is a nationally-recognized manufacturer of precision-turned components. Founded in 1963, the Wisconsin-based company has 20 machines and almost 80 employees. It serves a number of industries and OEM markets, including medical devices, defense and military, firearm and sighting systems, hydraulics, industrial equipment, and more.

Mitotec, which is ISO9001-2015 certified, has always been committed to adopting new technologies and engaging in continuous improvement—but needed better data to do so.

## The Quest for Good Data

Like most manufacturers, Mitotec felt constrained by its labor and operational resources.

“We needed to better understand the costs associated with our valuable resources, so we could utilize our people and capital equipment more fully,” says Clinton Pouille, General Manager.

Believing that “data helps you do more with what you have,” the manufacturer initially mounted a big board in the factory to track hourly job progress relative to goals. However, not only was its accuracy questionable, it didn’t provide the detail needed to make improvements.

That led Mitotec to search for a factory operating system that would collect and analyze machine activity digitally. Their number one priority: it had to be simple to implement and use.

## The Choice: Amper’s Factory Operating System

Following an extensive search, Mitotec chose Amper.

“Amper offered us what we needed: great features with easy justification,” says Bob Fourtounis, Operations Manager. “We determined that if we could save one hour a month with better utilization, the purchase would justify itself.”

Another plus: Amper integrates easily with all machine types—a must, since Mitotec’s mix of old and new equipment ranges from a 1989 SAS-16 from Tornos to brand new Eurotech Trofeos.

### Highlights

-  Wisconsin
-  60,000 sq ft
-  Precision-Turned Components
-  75+ Employees

Before committing, Mitotec took advantage of Amper’s free trial offer, placing Amper sensors on two machines—a move Pouille encourages other manufacturers to make.

Impressed by their initial findings, the company placed sensors on their five most critical machines, but—realizing that “critical” was a moving target—concluded it needed to monitor every piece of equipment.

## A Thoughtful, Thorough Implementation

Committed to using their new system to the fullest, Mitotec followed the Amper playbook, focusing squarely on analyzing downtime. That involved:

- Defining downtime as any time a machine was scheduled to run but was not, regardless of reason.
- Differentiating between planned (i.e., maintenance) and unplanned downtime.
- Adding “need to hire” as a reason for unplanned downtime, helping to quantify labor needs.
- Labeling 100% of downtime to get a clear, complete picture of shop floor activity.

In addition, they took the time to fully train their operators on the system, encouraging buy-in.

And—in an effort to hit Fourtounis’ lofty goal of improving utilization by 50%—management committed to a continuous improvement process that entailed identifying their top three reasons for downtime every quarter and building CI projects around them.

## Eye-opening Findings, Game-changing Results

When data revealed the factory's unproductive hours and associated costs, it was, says Fourtounis, "quite the eye-opener." However, **because the data pinpointed where and why downtime was occurring, they were able to remedy the issues through CI initiatives.**

As a result, Mitotec:

- Reduced average setup time from 9 hours to 7, a 20% reduction.
- Minimized downtime by enabling operators to call for support and quality control through the system, rather than leave their machines.
- Hired more operators, after learning they were losing more than 13,000 hours per year—a cost of \$914,000—due to "need to hire."

**Best of all, Mitotec could now leverage data to make and justify business decisions**—whether investing in training, offering new hires a signing bonus, or purchasing a new machine.

"Before Amper, our biggest issue was helping Finance and HR justify hiring and purchase costs," says Pouille. "Now, it makes sense."

And when they **hit Fourtounis' goal of 50% improvement**, "it justified our celebration, too."

## Saving \$1.4 Million in Less than a Year

**Mitotec's commitment to making data-driven improvements has translated to significant savings.** During their first 11 months using Amper, the manufacturer was able to:

- Reduce unplanned downtime by 35 hours per day, equating to \$656,000 in savings
- Reduce planned downtime by 40 hours per day, equating to \$750,000 in savings

**Taken together, the manufacturer is saving more than \$1,400,000 per year.**

"It's not just one thing that really helped us, it's a lot of different things that we worked on," says Pouille. "And it's going to be ever-flowing, because we've got to keep making improvements."

*"We're really impressed with Amper's technical support—they are definitely here for us as a partner."*

Clinton Pouille, General Manager, Mitotec

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