

CASE STUDY



Cabot Streamlines and Standardizes Scheduling, Greatly Improving Visibility



“The visibility created is a huge step forward. Schedulers are now truly master schedulers instead of “expeditors”. Aspen Plant Scheduler™ is telling them problems they didn’t know they had.”

– Michael Straley and Anthony Phillips, Cabot



Specialty chemical manufacturer’s Carbon Black business implements Aspen Plant Scheduler at more than 20 plants worldwide to close the gap between planning and execution.

Cabot is a specialty chemicals manufacturer with 42 manufacturing facilities in 18 countries that revenues \$2.5 billion. The company has expertise in making and handling fine particles, modifying the surfaces of very fine particles, and designing particle-media composites for specific properties.

Cabot has been an AspenTech customer for 10 years, using AspenTech engineering, advanced process control, and information management solutions across all global sites. Cabot made the decision to expand their AspenTech relationship into the supply chain space with Aspen Plant Scheduler.

CUSTOMER PROFILE - Cabot Corporation – Specialty Chemicals Supplier

CHALLENGE

Streamline the scheduling process and improve schedule use at Carbon Black plants worldwide.

SOLUTION

Replace existing processes and tools with Aspen Plant Scheduler at each plant.

BENEFITS

- Realize immediate improvement in visibility and quality of information provided to schedulers
- Improve the length of the scheduled production window
- Reduce working capital and inventory buffers

Cabot's Carbon Black business generally used their own Microsoft® Excel and Access-based tools, and schedulers did not have the visibility required to make timely business decisions. By standardizing on Aspen Plant Scheduler at all global Carbon Black sites, Cabot now has visibility into their supply chain to bridge execution gaps, thereby improving schedule use and response time, and reducing working capital.

BARRIERS TO MAINTAINING A CURRENT SCHEDULE

In order to streamline the scheduling process and improve schedule use at Carbon Black plants worldwide, Cabot had to eliminate the information gap that was a barrier to keeping the schedule current. Planning was performed regionally, scheduling was performed offline through customized tools at each plant, and executing events was done manually in the ERP system. As a result, schedulers were forced to spend the majority of their time gathering the data needed to make decisions. Cabot sought to improve the information available to the schedulers and enrich communication along the supply chain.

CLOSING THE INFORMATION GAP

Having identified the need to standardize on one scheduling model for all plants, Cabot is rolling out Aspen Plant Scheduler to 19 Carbon Black and 5 Fumed Metal Oxide sites globally. Based on the assumption that their scheduling needs are standard across all sites, the project team configured Aspen Plant Scheduler for the core scheduling tasks that are common among sites with limited customization of the interface. Cabot is approaching the rollout as a long-term, phased program with the first phase to include integration and basic scheduling at all plants.

The professional services team at AspenTech worked with Cabot to develop the standard scheduling model, as well as its implementation and deployment at the initial European plants. Cabot's four-stage implementation methodology and "cookie cutter" approach to basic scheduling enabled a faster and smoother rollout for subsequent plants, using mostly internal resources.

IMPROVEMENT IN VISIBILITY AND QUALITY OF INFORMATION

Plants in Europe, North America, and South America are using Aspen Plant Scheduler to schedule and interface to Cabot's ERP system on a daily basis. Time spent by schedulers on data gathering has been reduced by over 80 percent. Schedule horizons have been increased by two weeks and schedule completeness has jumped from 50 percent to more than 90 percent. Full integration using Aspen Supply Chain Connect has resulted in reduced working capital and the elimination of inventory buffers. Standardization of the data being used by the plants and a consolidated data view in a single interface allows more refined data to migrate down to a lower level and increases data availability outside the plant.

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AspenTech is a leading supplier of software that optimizes process manufacturing — for energy, chemicals, engineering and construction, and other industries that manufacture and produce products from a chemical process. With integrated aspenONE® solutions, process manufacturers can implement best practices for optimizing their engineering, manufacturing, and supply chain operations. As a result, AspenTech customers are better able to increase capacity, improve margins, reduce costs, and become more energy efficient. To see how the world's leading process manufacturers rely on AspenTech to achieve their operational excellence goals, visit www.aspentech.com.

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