



## Bodypoint

<https://www.bodypoint.com/ecommerce/>

## Industry



Textiles

## Employees

38

## Headquarters

Seattle, WA, USA

### LYNQ MES AT BODYPOINT:

#### CONTROLLING COSTS AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Specialist safety equipment manufacturer Bodypoint found that the adoption of LYNQ MES has quickly delivered improvements in costing, inventory, time management and quality control.

Bodypoint designs and manufactures postural supports that improve safety, comfort, function and independence for wheelchair users. Manufacturing in Seattle, United States since 1991, its Quality Management System has been certified as compliant with ISO 9001:2015. The company tests all its products – available in more than 40 countries – to all applicable ISO, EN and ANSI/RESNA standards for safety and durability.

Bodypoint's end-customers are wheelchair users; people who are paraplegic or quadriplegic. Its mission is "to create exceptional products that enable individuals in a wheelchair to improve their lives". Correct body positioning leads to a more fulfilling life, whether that is something as simple as reaching across the dinner table or competing in the Paralympic Games. Every device it makes improves someone's mobility and independence. For the users, details matter, so every part and material, no matter how small, is carefully selected for maximum performance and made to exacting specifications.

#### Individual designs

A lot of care and thought goes into Bodypoint's anatomically-contoured supports that increase individual function and encourage regular use by remaining comfortable for all-day wear. The product designs use padding that won't over-stretch, webbing that resists slipping, stitching that doesn't pull out and soft postural supports that can be machine washed, repeatedly, without fraying or falling apart.

"Our products have to be prescribed by a medical physician, occupational therapist, physical therapist, or other medical professional. They are not something that can just be bought off the shelf," says Ed Hanrahan, Vice-President of Operations.

Bodypoint, which employs 38 people, 24 of them in manufacturing at its site in Seattle, Washington, has suppliers in the United States and around the world, including China, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Korea. The materials selected for any particular product will depend on the person's injury or issue; no one material meets all needs. A wheelchair user who has no use of their lower body will require fixed restraints or supports, while the upper body will be better served with support that is flexible and stretchy, to allow reasonable movement.

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### Inventory, stock-keeping and production management

Bodypoint orders and stores its materials “families”, according to their use, rather than SKUs (stock-keeping units).

“We will have a group of shoulder harnesses, for example, a group of bath belts, two-point hip belts, four-point hip belts, and so on,” Hanrahan says. “Within those families, we break down into smaller segments, based on individual needs. And that’s where we get specific on materials, what the hardware applications are, and so on.” A list of material families would be about half a page long; once it is broken down into individual segments and applications relevant to individual needs, the list extends to over 1,000 products. And that is where operations management gets complicated.

**“We were flying blind from the standpoint of capacity and I wanted to take us from average costing to actual costing. LYNQ MES could do all of that.”**

Ed Hanrahan -  
Vice-President of Operations

Bodypoint already had an ERP solution that worked as the core of its financial management. Manufacturing management was manual, typically with a paper order and very specific instructions. Engineering drawings and specification pages had to be attached to each and every work order, so that the operators of sewing machines and final assembly knew how to manufacture each item. The room for errors and either miscommunicated or misunderstood instructions was high, and this was not the only problem.

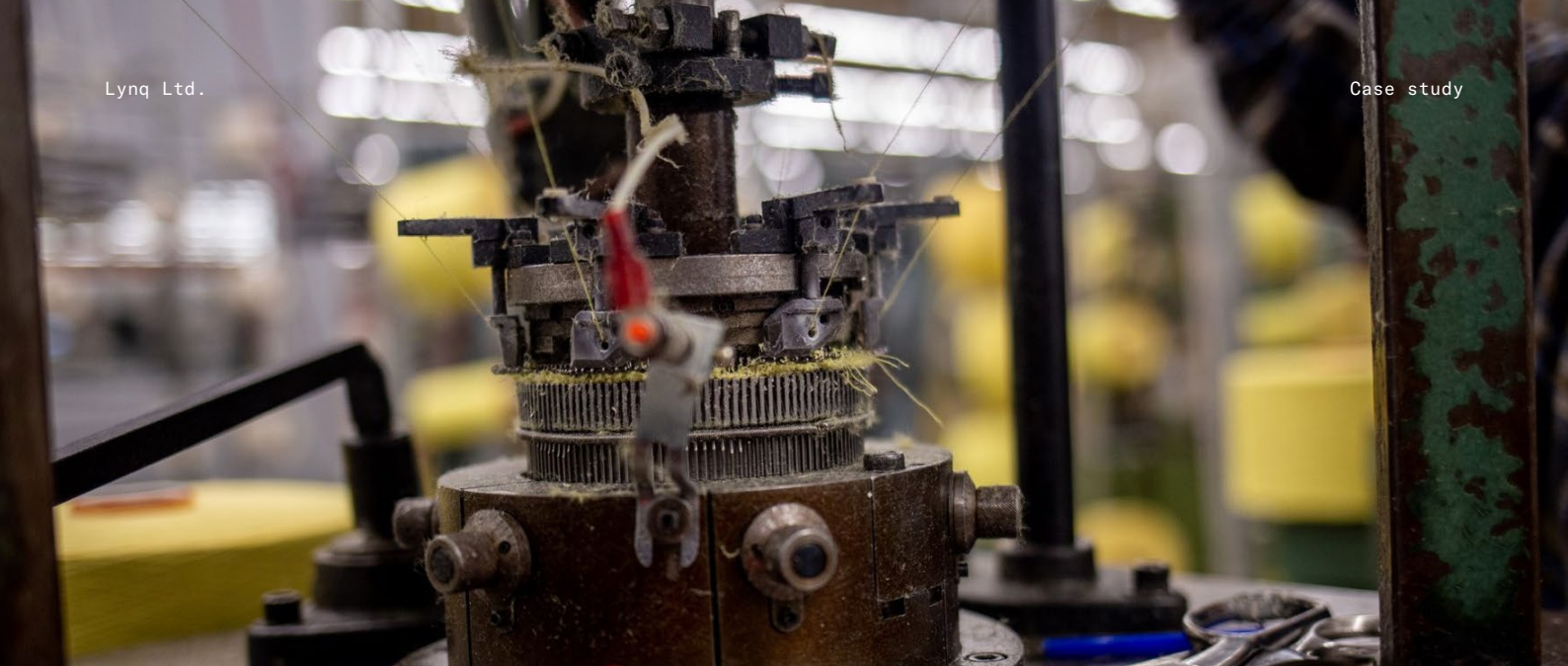
“We were flying blind from the standpoint of capacity,” Hanrahan explains. “We were doing everything with kanbans, which work really well in some situations. But in others, as your business is growing, for example, kanbans tend to grow your inventory. In terms of capacity modelling and keeping track of what we were doing and the way we were using minimums and maximums, it wasn’t working.”

### Paper-based inefficiency

The manual system was inefficient. Searching for a particular item was “like looking for a needle in a haystack”, says Hanrahan, because so much work was being issued to the production floor at any time.

Costing was done on an average basis, rather than actual costings. At the beginning of the process, Bodypoint’s operations management, essentially, created a report, then referred to a report of minimum and maximum, and decided what was needed. Work orders and drawings were printed, bringing them together and then manually scheduling. There were 31 folders, one for each day of a month. Work orders were filed by the date they needed to be issued to the floor; the orders went out, then there was a window of time within which to complete it and, when it was done, the job would be manually closed. The system worked, after a fashion, but it was manual, cumbersome and costly.





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Hanrahan knew that the system had to be replaced.

Then he had a chance meeting with John Grima of LYNQ MES.

### A glimpse of something better

“John brought me up to speed on what the LYNQ MES (manufacturing execution management) tool could do,” he says. “We were looking to automate the planning process, to find a way to eliminate all these paper-based work orders. I wanted to have point of view access for drawings and specifications for the operators on the production floor and to take the process from where things would be handwritten to be able to track each job through the system.

Bodypoint is a small business, which meant that installation could have been a bit of a challenge; the company could not afford to take people out of production for days at a time to install, integrate and train. “The target training time is 12 to 16 weeks but it took longer than that. I had the help of others on my team, but I have to say, Curtis Patching of LYNQ, who delivered the training, is one of the best trainers I have worked with in 30 years of manufacturing,” says Hanrahan. “LYNQ MES is not the first new system I have implemented! There was a lot involved in the set up. The attention to detail, thoroughness and accuracy he brought to the table was just wonderful.”

Even so, the process started in April 2020 and switch-on was in January 2021. The question is: was it a success?

### Improved understanding and visibility

“Our main objectives in automating our scheduling process were to understand our machine and labour capacity; move away from average costing to actual manufacturing and production cost; and to obtain other vital information that would help us to target higher efficiency – and in a system that was easy to use,” says Hanrahan. “These are the opportunities that I saw in the LYNQ MES system.”

Bodypoint is very lean and has a strong focus on continuous improvement, so it was essential to have that scheduling and costing information readily accessible, to drive forward.

“I can now do that. I can drive into whatever buckets of information I want to look at,” he explains.

“All our initial goals, for scheduling, costing and capacity planning, have been achieved. We aren’t doing any of that manually anymore. Producing actual costings is wonderful.”

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**Improved production performance and cost savings**

All the preparation and planning, the extra time taken to ensure it was done correctly, has paid off with a system that has helped improve Bodypoint's production and commercial performance.

Hanrahan is delighted to report that the successful installation of LYNQ MES has delivered an 80% reduction in the paper used for the manufacturing process, using an automated system

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that is intuitive. Inspection is done at each machine, rather than waiting to the end of the line.

“The new system allows me to track employees, materials and quality issues and notifies me if there's an issue,” Hanrahan says. “It provides accurate data on operations and overall job costs. Average costing has been eliminated. It's helped me fine tune my bills of materials and time costings and make them more accurate.”

LYNQ MES has already saved two hours of paperwork per day. There are other clear savings too. A production manager is due to retire in 2022 and, thanks to the MES system, there is no longer a need to replace him.

All the operators – the majority of whom speak English as a second language – are using touchscreens instead of paper at every machine. Paperwork is expected to be cut a further 10% in the near future.

“Without reservation, I would highly recommend LYNQ MES to any company seeking to automate their scheduling and manufacturing processes. The benefits of readily available access to all facets of scheduling and production information, combined with a system that is operator friendly and easy to use results in significant time and efficiency savings, while also providing a system that supports any company's continuous improvement efforts,” Ed Hanrahan concludes.