

5 critical problems holding wire and cable companies back in 2023

How a metals-specific ERP can be the key to accelerating business forward



Amid volatility, increasing customer demands, and a new generation of workers, the metals industry is changing.

And amid this change, the technology wire and cable companies are using needs to be able to keep up.

It's no longer an option to use disparate or legacy systems. Customers are demanding more, the next generation of metals workers has higher expectations, and aging systems are unable to handle volatility in the market.

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) technology tailored to the unique demands of the metals industry is here, and without it, your wire and cable company could fall behind.

Following are five critical problems wire and cable companies face that might prevent them from stepping into the future.



■ Critical problem 1

Inventory management is imprecise

A wire and cable worker might have access to see how many feet of cable are on hand, but is the cable the right length to meet customer specifications?

Wire and cable companies' inventory management must be as detailed as customer order requirements.

When metals workers have limited access to key information and lack a system to standardize data, they have to manually sort through information to get what they need, which increases lead times and the potential for human error that could affect product quality.

An ERP system that allows for user-defined product attributes such as length, grade, and diameter gives wire and cable workers a platform to meet the unique demands of their customers. When they can easily view detailed inventory information, they can quickly determine if they have the right materials to fill a customer order or if materials need to be sourced.



■ Critical problem 2

Production processes lag

The production process plays a key role in meeting customer demands among wire and cable companies. Customer orders require certain specifications regarding tensile strength, length, number of heats, and more.

As wire and cable planners coordinate production schedules, timing is everything.

Between minimizing machine downtime and establishing accurate lead times for customers, planners face the tedious task of taking a multitude of factors into account. Throughout the production cycle, they need real-time updates about whether materials continue to meet specifications so they can isolate them if needed. Without a system that properly supports this process, lead times can increase, traceability breaks down, and excess scrap might be produced.

A metals-specific ERP system helps streamline the process down to the details. By maximizing machine runtime and receiving quality updates in real time, planners can proactively address quality concerns, reduce scrap, minimize machine downtime, and reduce the need for on-hand inventory.



■ Critical problem 3

Pricing is inaccurate

Establishing pricing that takes material cost and industry regulations into consideration without cutting into margin – and isn't priced too high for today's market – can be a stressful task, given the many variables at play. Especially when material costs seem to be a moving target, wire and cable leaders must stay on top of the latest information to create accurate pricing.

The manual process of pulling key information together to make calculations is time-consuming, and it leaves room for miscalculations.

With an ERP system tailored to the metals industry, wire and cable leaders can pull in real-time pricing updates from indexes such as the London Metal Exchange or the London Commodity Exchange, price in alternate units of measurement, and calculate pricing based on cost-plus rules. A standardized method to create pricing structures helps confirm pricing is accurate, consistent, and up to date.



■ Critical problem 4

Disparate systems cause inefficiencies

Customers expect the same level of quality and service from a company regardless of which facility they work with.

Using disparate systems at various locations hinders the ability to standardize data and processes and creates a disconnect between facilities. This inconsistency is inefficient, it leads to a poor customer experience, and it limits visibility for team members placing and keeping track of orders.

Wire and cable companies operating out of multiple facilities should have a unified system and process across locations.

A single-system ERP solution implemented companywide can bridge the gaps between facilities. Automation features and the functionality to use different units of measurement and pricing helps create streamlined operations, greater visibility, and an improved customer experience.



■ Critical problem 5

Leaders lack visibility into data

When processes and data are stored in spreadsheets, wire and cable leaders can't access the critical information they need to make better, more informed decisions.

It takes time and coordination to gather necessary data when it's scattered in different systems, especially if it's coming from multiple facilities and different countries. By the time key information is pulled and standardized, it could be outdated or no longer valuable in making critical decisions. In addition, the security risk increases for information that's kept in multiple locations.

Metals leaders need a comprehensive view of what's happening in the business – with all variables accounted for – to determine the next right steps.

An ERP system using cloud technology helps mitigate risks and standardizes and stores information in one secure location so metals leaders can have visibility into every area of business and tap into data analytics to gain insights into proactive solutions.

| The solution

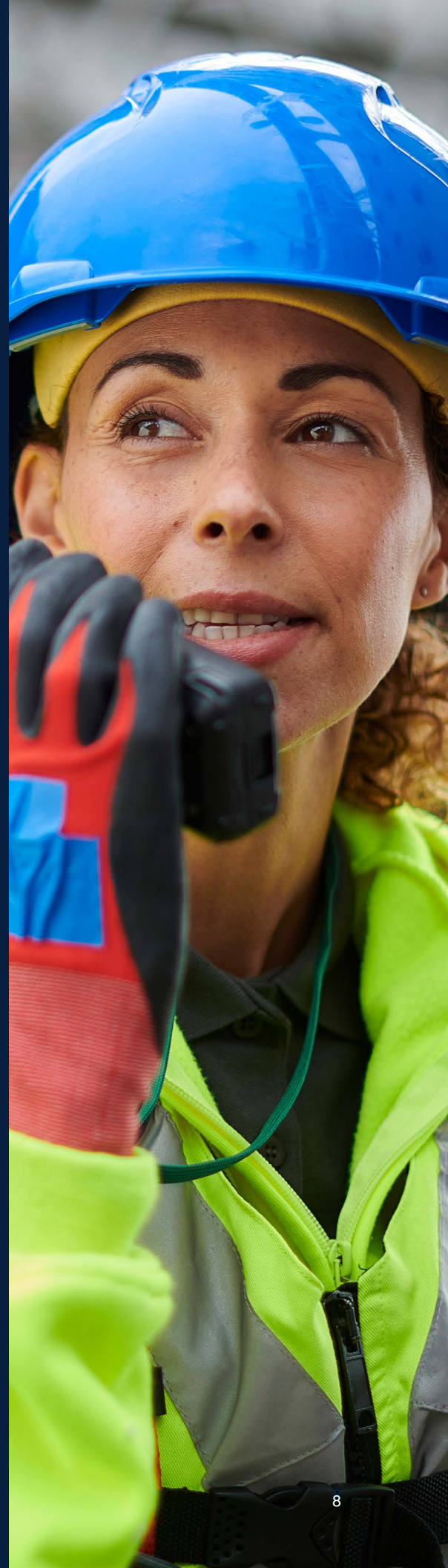
Step into the future with confidence

As wire and cable companies face ongoing changes in the market, it's important they have the right technology to help prepare for what's ahead.

An ERP solution tailored to the metals industry can equip wire and cable leaders with the technology they need to establish proactive, streamlined processes that meet their unique needs.

At Crowe, we combine decades of metals industry experience with deep specialization in Microsoft™ technology. We understand that wire and cable companies need more from their technology solutions. That's why we created Crowe Metals Accelerator.

Built on the Microsoft Dynamics 365™ platform, this end-to-end ERP solution is tailored to the unique demands of wire and cable companies. With the power and adaptability of Microsoft and the team of specialists at Crowe, you can step confidently into the future with technology that works for you.





Interested in learning more about how Crowe + Microsoft can bring your wire and cable company into the future?

Our team of specialists is here to answer any questions you have and help you on your digital transformation journey.

Schedule a time to talk



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CMFG2403-002A