



Avondale Mills, Inc. is a Monroe, Georgia based textile company with a history dating back to 1845. Avondale has 17 plants located in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, with sales offices located throughout the United States. The company is a leading producer of greige fabrics, denim, sportswear, workwear, coated specialty products, and quality sales yarns for knitted and woven fabrics. The company is one of the nation's largest producers of fabrics in each of these segments; one of the top two producers of denim and sales yarn; and one of the largest consumers of raw cotton.

Avondale faces the market challenges of responding to growing customer requests of full package productions and of competing in a free trade environment. To maintain its competitive advantage in the industry, Avondale made a decision to invest in supply chain management systems. After a thorough investigation of integrated manufacturing solutions, the company selected Alpharetta, Ga.-based Datatex TIS Inc.'s Textile Integrated Manufacturing (TIM) solution.

The datatex suite of solutions meets the needs of single-step textile production companies, as well as complex, multi-site operations covering the full supply chain manufacturing and distribution processes.

Today, there are more than 350 implementations of datatex systems operating in 38 countries in 14 different languages. Companies ranging from large, publicly traded corporations to small family-owned companies are able to achieve their corporate goals and objectives using datatex solutions.

Avondale's New Solution

Earlier this year, Avondale's Yarns Division became the first company unit to go on-line with the new application. Recently, Mike Mann, senior account executive, Datatex, sat down with Barry Graham, Director and CIO, Information Systems; and Charles Lambert, manager, Business Systems, Avondale, to gain insights of the project.

Datatex: What was the existing information technology (IT) environment at Avondale before the purchase of the Datatex TIM solution, and what were Avondale's goals for the new Supply Chain Management solution?

Avondale: The previous IT environment was custom-written code and separate systems for each of the company's four business segments. As a make to order business, Avondale wanted to improve the manufacturing and logistics information available to all management levels.

Datatex: What were the IT department's goals with the purchase of the new solution?

Avondale: The primary goal was to consolidate all business units onto one textile specific system, which would provide the ability to plan and schedule throughout all manufacturing processes. This consolidation would improve the overall business environment and allow the reduction of IT costs, while providing better service to management.

TIM's integrated approach makes more information on the manufacturing process available to management and to the customer service organization. The positive business impact with this information will be substantial.

Datatex: Did you have an interest in purchasing horizontal or industry 'Best in Practice' software solutions?

Avondale: We wanted a textile industry specific-solution that could be defined to fit our manufacturing and logistics processes without re-engineering the company. TIM's modular design and table-driven structure allowed us to go live with the new application software at far lower cost and with fewer custom modifications than other proposed packages.

Datatex: What about the textile industry knowledge you have experienced with Datatex's management group?

Avondale: Datatex's industry knowledge across the entire team has been tremendous. Its knowledge of textile manufacturing and systems processes has allowed the Avondale group to maintain its focus on managing the daily business of the company, which is not always the case with regard to the implementation of supply chain management systems. In fact, the Datatex software implementation has been one of the better system projects that IT has undertaken.

Datatex: What are the main Avondale supply chain management processes that are supported by the Datatex TIM system?

Avondale: Avondale purchased all modules of the TIM solution. Planning and scheduling were crucial to our plans. When all business processes are implemented we expect to manage the entire sales order cycle, from acceptance and credit through manufacturing, shipping and invoicing. TIM will let us confirm the delivery dates based on finite production capacity, work-in-process and forecasts.

Datatex: Many textile companies are being pushed by their customers to 'full package' offerings. From an IT viewpoint, does the TIM solution support Avondale's sales team compete?

Avondale: Yes, Avondale is planning to expand its sales presence in the full package area. The vertical nature of Avondale, fully supported by TIM's comprehensive information, gives the company a strategic advantage in this rapidly expanding area.

Datatex: In closing, what are your future expectations for the TIM solution?

Avondale: We expect to expand the TIM solution throughout all Avondale business units. We have high expectations that the TIM solution will continue to improve our ability to plan and schedule on a timely basis. As a make-to-order business, we rely on our abilities to manage the business to provide committed delivery dates, determine plant and vendor capacities, and know the profit of orders. They are the key drivers of our business.