



 A. Schulman



Interview with Manuel Angulo,
Manufacturing Manager at A. Schulman

“Our excellent results in terms of traceability have led the management to extend this MES approach to the group’s other plants”



From a local project to an international strategy



12 sites already equipped in 10 countries (470 customer licenses), 8 languages implemented



Customer feedback praises the organization, quality and traceability of the processes

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Automating input of weighing data
- ✓ Ensuring traceability of production information
- ✓ Extending the MES approach to all plants in the group

Eliau / A. Schulman Group

Eliau / A. Schulman Group, based in Oyonnax, France, is historically specialized in the **production of masterbatches (plastic coloring elements)**. In 2006, Eliau decided to undertake a process to develop the reliability of its weighing data and, one thing leading to another, an entire MES project based on the CIMAG-Production solution was being implemented. In 2012, when the company was purchased by US leader A. Schulman, Eliau would push this same MES approach into all plants in the group.

Manuel Angulo, Manufacturer Manager at A. Schulman, gives his feedback on this large-scale project through an interview.



First Steps Towards a Genuine Continuous Improvement Process

“Our CPC (Custom Performance Colors) activity is similar to a cooking recipe: we must precisely weigh each of the “ingredients” to make our masterbatches. Until 2006, we recorded these weighings on paper. Suffice to say that reliability was hardly there, not to mention the loss of documents and therefore of information. As a Manufacturing Manager, I had to find **solutions to make this process more reliable.**”

Following recommendations from one of his computer partners, A. Schulman reached out to a provider specialized in production data management solutions.

“We were introduced to Alpha-3i, who naturally offered us a turnkey system for automatic recording of our weighings, based on the CIMAG-Production solution. Very quickly, we became able to access reliable indicators. **This was a significant step forward for us!** Although some staff members were initially cautious about the use of the IT tool, it ended up being easily accepted because of its ease of use!”

From a Simple Weighing Project to a Full-Fledged MES Process

“Data reliability, simplicity of use, rapidity of integration of the tool were all the more reasons for extending the use of the solution to extrusion and then to all manufacturing, control and, finally, shipment. Outcomes: no more paper left lying around the workshop, we saved more than 4 to 5,000 sheets of paper per day and, above all, we gained time in collecting and reporting data, organizing schedules, monitoring our inventory, etc. In short, everyone had the same information at the same time and in real time! **We found in CIMAG-Production a helpful tool for our daily activities.**”



For more than 20 years, Alpha-3i has offered state-of-the-art **software and hardware solutions** for business management in three main areas:

- ✓ Workshop management, real-time monitoring of production operations, scheduling - **CIMAG-Production**
- ✓ Time management - **CIMAG-Attendance**
- ✓ Access control - **CIMAG-Access**

According to Manuel Angulo, the success of this project is based on the involvement of all, but also the guarantee that the workshop staff is provided with information in a highly visual way. But that is not all.

“**The receptivity and expertise of Alpha-3i were also key to the success of this project.** We found in Alpha-3i a listening partner, actively putting forward new ideas and advice. They were able to make IT available to our needs, not the other way around, as it is often the case. And it was done without specific developments, simply by configuring its solution...”

From Local to International

“The project did not stop there! Indeed, when we were bought up by the A. Schulman Group, our excellent performance led the management to extend this MES approach to the group’s other plants. To date, 12 plants in Europe are equipped with CIMAG-Production, and deployment is under way in other countries. The project therefore takes on an international dimension which requires standardizing processes, managing multilingualism and setting up the inherent organization. A full-time CIMAG manager has been designated for the entire group, 9 people participate in the project team, as well as 12 local factory supervisors. An MES dedicated server has even been implemented.”

“**Alpha-3i continues to assist us on a daily basis** from a technical and methodological point of view, with a team of consultants, developers and support functions. The feedback from our customers and audits carried out in our plants are unequivocal: **organization, quality and traceability are today the brand name of our group.**”

The MES approach, first initiated by A. Schulman, has made it possible to offer a distinguishing feature to the A. Schulman Group and thus to provide it with “SMART” sales.

-- Manuel Angulo,
Manufacturing Manager at A. Schulman.

BENEFITS



- ✓ **Reliable and accessible data**
- ✓ **Harmonized processes** for all plants in the group
- ✓ **A real comparative advantage** for the A. Schulman Group in a highly competitive market