

## ConturELN improves collaboration and information sharing at Plasticolors Inc.

### Custom product development puts high demands on research and development

Plasticolors Inc., a custom colorant and chemical dispersions manufacturer for the thermoset plastics and paint and coatings industries, recently sought the assistance of the Contur Electronic Laboratory Notebook (ConturELN) to improve efficiency in its research and development department. With the information technology upgrades provided by ConturELN, Plasticolors' R&D process has been stream-lined to increase the speed to market for new and custom products.

Plasticolors' focus on technology and product development has resulted in a wide range of R&D services for customers, putting high demands on the R&D department to fulfill the company's value promise to customers: quality, speed and service.

Historically, the lab at Plasticolors relied on paper notebooks to document experiments and tasks performed during the research and development process. Most of the information was reported in Microsoft Word or Excel with hard-copies transferred to the paper notebooks. This time-consuming process made it cumbersome to access and share information among colleagues.

According to David Hyde, Coatings Process Development Engineer and ConturELN team leader at Plasticolors, "One of the main issues for us when we started looking at new technology was the accessibility of information within our group and other departments within the company. Security was also a critical requirement," he said.

Plasticolors formed an internal focus group to determine what they wanted to accomplish with a new system. The group established the critical necessities, which included low maintenance, security at all levels, remote access and multiple-user input. Furthermore, the system had to be easy to search, handle various data types (graphics, texts, spreadsheets), and also be functional for sales and technical support.

ConturELN was one of several companies to bid the project, but ultimately won because the proposal met all of Plasticolors' expectations.

**"It provided us with the simplest, most efficient interface that the users liked and approved," said Hyde. "The new system efficiently encourages the sharing of information within R&D, as well as to other departments, while providing the security we require."**

According to Selby Brannon, Plasticolors' Technical Director, "The information we gather in R&D is now efficiently stored so we will have easy access in the future as we move forward with new technologies for our customers. To have all information readily available for our scale-up group is a great help."

The ConturELN system is considered an 'open system', meaning that users can access information from their colleagues' notebooks. Because all data is put straight into the ELN and stored in one place, information is easily shared between colleagues and teams.

"This ability brings the department together because we can learn from each other's work, and ultimately bring products to market faster," said Brannon.

The feedback from the users at Plasticolors has been very positive. ConturELN is considered very easy to use and it helps them document the daily work in a much more efficient and less time-consuming way.

In the coming year ConturELN will also be linked to Plasticolors' main ERP, back-office business system for added efficiency.

#### **More about Plasticolors, Inc.**

Plasticolors, Inc., a leading supplier of pigment and chemical dispersions to the paint, coatings, caulk, sealants and thermoset plastics industries, manufactures products for customers in the automotive, appliance, equipment, electrical, consumer and construction industries.

The company's colorants can be found in a wide variety of products, including interior and exterior automotive components, epoxy flooring, electrical and appliance housings, and a myriad of paints, coatings and molded composite applications. The company is ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO/TS-16949 certified.