

## Acro Improves Flow of Excellence with SYSPRO

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### ■ The Company

Acro Associates, a designer of state-of-the-art fluid control systems for medical device and bioprocessing companies, is known throughout the industry for their innovation and excellence in product design. The Concord, Calif.-based company combines a newly launched technology called the ACROSENSE™ Fluid Control Platform with a portfolio of precision pinch valves, contract design and manufacturing services. By offering values such as these to R&D groups responsible for producing and commercializing devices, Acro helps convey the latest technologies into medical device and bioprocessing systems in health-care.

Acro Associates started in 1976 as a machine shop in Concord making pinch valves for fluid control systems. Within a few years, the company began designing and manufacturing custom pinch valves specifically for the medical device industry. The valves, which enabled precise control of fluids in critical processes such as kidney dialysis, paved the way for the development of complete fluid control systems.

*“We embrace technology, not for the sake of embracing it, but to add value.”*

- Russell Zeigler  
President, Acro

By the mid 1990s, Acro’s designs had become central to flow processes across the country, having made their way into the medical, pharmaceutical, analytical, industrial and bioprocessing industries. Today, the company is licensed by the California Department of Health Medical Device Manufacturing and is ISO 9001:2001-certified.

Russell Ziegler, President of Acro, believes that there is more to the company than just great products. “If I had to put it into a single word,” he says, “I’d say we are innovators. We’re bringing new solutions.” From day one, he says, the company has clung steadfastly to a theme of providing highly customizable, high-performance and reliable products. “We embrace technology, not for the sake of embracing it, but to add value,” he asserts.

### ■ The Challenge

Acro had been using SYSPRO since 1992. In fact, they were the first company to implement SYSPRO in Northern California (they had previously been using MAS90). Originally, they selected SYSPRO as a solution that could satisfy the needs of a small business and which would grow simultaneously with the company as it became a medium and eventually a large manufacturer. And after 15

### ■ AT A GLANCE ■

#### COMPANY

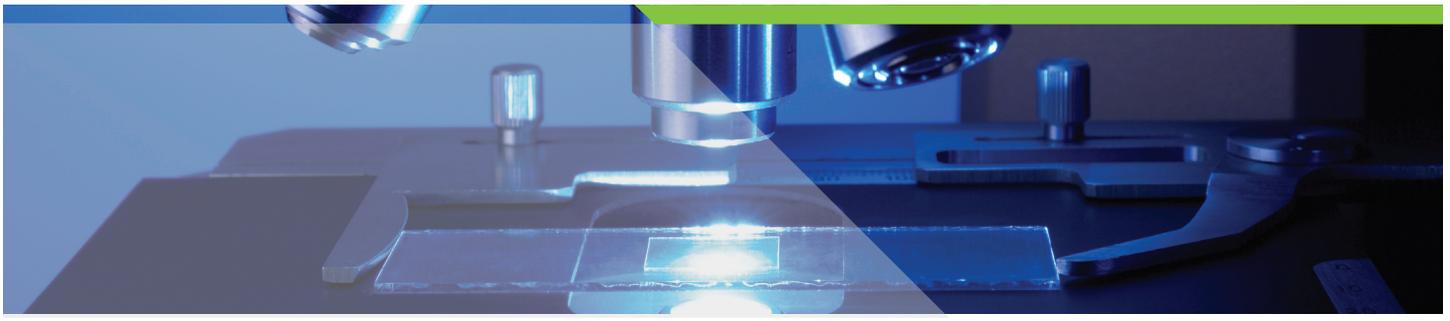
Acro Associates

#### INDUSTRY

Medical Device Manufacturing



**ACRO**  
Innovators in Fluid Control Systems



years, Ziegler recalls, “We had not been disappointed. But, we realized that our company had gotten stagnant on its implementation.” Consequently, in 2007, ACRO underwent a new software search.

Primarily, Acro needed a solution that could bring advanced financial and operational efficiency as the company grew. However, during their search the company also had to keep one principle in mind: quality. As a player in the medical device industry, Acro is subjected to stringent quality control regulations and is required to report to the regulating agencies. Thus, finding an ERP solution that could match their needs in scalability and performance while also maintaining an accurate, visible account of their quality was imperative.

### ■ The Solution

After a thorough evaluation, the company decided that the best option was not to purchase a new ERP software solution, but reinvest in the SYSPRO solution. The company upgraded to the current version, SP2, in late 2007. The newer version offers efficiency-enabling enhancements in user interfaces, dashboards, traceability functions and quality management, to name a few. “We worked hard with SYSPRO,” says Zeigler, “and when we launched SP2 the software did what we were told it would do. The customer support team at SYSPRO was great!”

### ■ The Result

Ziegler stresses that, “SYSPRO has done a remarkable job evolving with the times – providing the right information at the right time for people at different levels and positions inside Acro to do their job. Through the Roles-based User Interfaces, it gives us the ability to customize what people see, so they don’t get distracted with the pieces of information that have nothing to do with them.”

The most useful part of SYSPRO for Ziegler is the dashboards. “They help our executives make key day-to-day

business decisions,” he says. “Having the information is only good as far as you can interpret it. SYSPRO helps us piece it together really nicely – we get real-time access and we can quickly see any and all operations.” SYSPRO Executive Dashboards allow management to easily organize the essential, pertinent data in a way that best suits the individual, both visually and functionally.

Another way that Acro uses SYSPRO to stay ahead of the competition is by utilizing uniPoint for SYSPRO. uniPoint is a quality management software that integrates seamlessly with the SYSPRO ERP system to streamline critical quality control processes and enhance compliance capabilities. Ziegler attributes a 30% reduction in time spent on managing the ISO TQM (Total Quality Management) system to uniPoint. “It has made a tremendous difference in freeing up our head of Quality to focus more on continuing to improve our TQM system,” he says, “instead of having to spend countless hours updating logs.”

For a company like Acro (which itself is not FDA-certifiable, but its customers are), precision and accuracy in product and in business are vital. “uniPoint improved things for us dramatically. And, our auditors were very impressed with the system and how easily we were able to get to the relevant information and track/measure various quality metrics.”

In addition, Acro uses the MRP and Lot Traceability modules on a day-to-day basis to drive overall productivity in operations. “We’ve been using SYSPRO for a very long time, and we’re using it today because it’s re-empowering everybody,” he says. Because the software is fully integrated, for example, it enables all the departments to communicate and has, in turn, enabled an 80% reduction in time spent generating month-end reports. “We used to have to move a lot of information around, now SYSPRO does all that heavy lifting. And it has enough runway for us to continue our investment in productivity and be very happy with the ROI we will get.”