



ERP Manufacturing Software for Oracle, Sage and Quickbooks providing a Workflow Automation and Transaction Management Platform for Small Manufacturers



Eva DeGasperis



Renato DeGasperis

Interview with:
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CEOCFO: Ms. DeGasperis, what was the vision when you started the company, and where are you today?

Ms. DeGasperis: The vision was focused around small manufacturers, and to provide tools to aid in the automation of workflow and process and management of transactions with a goal of getting to the point where we provided and we're embedded within the organizations as a strategic element in their day-to-day operations.

CEOCFO: How has that played out over these years? What is your focus today?

Ms. DeGasperis: At the foundation, we're still focused on the foundation that we started with. It's been very effective, and we continue to perfect as technology has evolved. The people running manufacturing, operations have evolved, and we've been able to expand both the breadth and depth of our offering, so that's made it quite successful in our field.

**"Go live in ERP is just a milestone."
- Renato DeGasperis**

CEOCFO: *How do you become a partner and not just a vendor? How do you make that crossover?*

Ms. DeGasperis: I think the relationship builds, and I think at the foundation it has a lot to do with the strength of our team and the variety of skills we bring to the table where we're providing not only the technology, but real experience in resolving operational issues and how to aid our customers in moving their businesses forward. A lot of it comes from the breadth of our experience and then delivery – proof is in the pudding, right? We've been able to bring real value to the organization and become a part of the infrastructure and a trusted advisor.

CEOCFO: *Would you give us a couple of examples of when a company might turn to you, what the problem would be, and how you're able to look at it and help them make the change?*

Ms. DeGasperis: Certainly. So one example would be in understanding their costing and how to develop pricing models to make them competitive in the marketplace. Having a solid understanding of the infrastructure and how to model costs and track that information in the appropriate level of detail and frequency lets us work with them to build those models and track the success against them so that they can modify and tweak as needed. That whole costing, pricing area is important. How to get the most efficiency out of their plans and operation by understanding the nature of the equipment, how to best group to support efficiencies, ways in which they can improve based on assumptions and scheduling, et cetera, so that all becomes another area where we can provide value. Those are two. Last but not least, near to my heart, is the importance of inventory – helping them understand the importance of it as the center of what we do in manufacturing and the control needed to manage the impact that has on all the operational stakeholders and developing practices that allow them to sustain with minimal cost and minimal human intervention through that process. Those would be three examples of areas where we help companies.

CEOCFO: *Are you surprised that manufacturers do not understand the importance of inventory?*

Ms. DeGasperis: It is a big shock to me because I always liken it to, would you leave your checkbook signed out in the middle of the shop floor? Of course, that would never happen. Inventory standing alone isn't such a big problem; it's the understanding of the importance of the interaction between all involved in receiving, using, transforming and shipping, and not dealing with the silos, and having the right people involved. Unfortunately, when people think of inventory and warehouses, they think of it as kind of an hourly type position and expect turnover in that kind of position where it really needs to be someone that understands the importance of the interaction, the fact that they're there delivering to customers within the organization, the timeliness, the accuracy, and how that impacts all of the colleagues in that area. But it's a common theme, and I'm a big believer it's one of the main problems and the biggest source of waste in manufacturing in North America. We do have exposure to others in Europe, and you don't see this as much. But North America, it's prevalent. It's everywhere.

CEOCFO: *What do you need to know about the physical equipment and how it operates so that you can integrate that in your whole plan for a company?*

Ms. DeGasperis: Yeah, it does. The key to success is knowing that we don't know everything, and understanding the right questions to ask and ensuring that we have the right people on the team. There's a number of us from professional accountants or either professional engineers on our team, and obviously there's going to be a core set of knowledge there. I think that the strength is knowing and identifying what are the key triggers in and out of a process and who do we need from the customer to be on the team to bring that specific content knowledge to the table so that we can embed that in to the design of the solution.

CEOCFO: *Who is turning to you? What types, what sizes of manufacturers, geography, and how do companies find INDUSTRIOS, or are you known in the industry because of your history?*

Ms. DeGasperis: You may or may not be aware; it's quite a competitive arena that we play in. The types of customers are typically an owner managed company where they're transitioning to more professional or traditional organization structures with managers. So they've got enough of an organization that they need to start incorporating these kinds of measures. We also, at the other end of the scale, work with large corporations with subsidiaries looking to establish common practices across those subsidiaries where it makes sense, so that they've got a common way of collecting and analyzing performance information. It will scale from owner managed to more corporate structure. Typically, it's a search on the Internet looking for help, looking for a solution, where we find clients coming in. Word of mouth between customers and oftentimes it'll be employees of the customers that move on to other firms that know that we're good at what we do and deliver what we say, and call back. We're working on one of those projects right now.

CEOCFO: *Are there companies that start with one of the solutions you offer and then grow with you from there?*

Ms. DeGasperis: Definitely. I think it's important. A lot of these companies are running lean, and the reality is they can only absorb so much change at once. A more continuous improvement type approach, we find, actually works much better and allows the solution to stick, and change to sustain.

CEOCFO: *You have a tab on your site “beyond technology”. What else are you offering?*

Ms. DeGasperis: Well, again I'll share a specific example with you. We were engaged to help from a HR perspective in a couple of sites where they asked us to write specific job descriptions and help them with the interview process to place new hires in specific roles. Again, because of our knowledge of their operations and the importance of some of the key tasks and activities we've been engaged in hiring directors of finance, controllers, system administrators, so that's one area that may not seem as traditional. Doing some compliance audits, we've been involved in what I call internal audits as well as assisting in customer specific contract audits where again, it goes beyond just tease and seize, there's process discussions and how does the infrastructure work to support the specific contract requirements. So that's another area where we're able to go beyond just technology and provide value to the customers we deal with.

CEOCFO: *What was the response at the Sage Summit this year?*

Mr. DeGasperis: I would say the response was excellent. We launched a program at the summit called the Invisible Factory, you say you've been to our website, you might have seen parts of that program. But Eva just described a couple of areas where the Invisible Factory comes in to play. There are a couple of other areas like mentoring programs where companies that implement ERP can benefit from repetition in training as well as some on job assistance to take advantage of the numerous different tools to help them deal with inventory analysis or purchasing requirements or production scheduling. Go live in ERP is just a milestone. A little mentoring as you go along, where we have some of our staff sit in production meetings, for example, on a weekly or monthly basis to help our customers use INDUSTRIOS to deal with the changes that come their way on a regular basis. Of course the Invisible Factory attracts a lot of interest and curiosity, and the whole idea at Sage was to promote the Invisible Factory and just kind of wrap things. You've been to the website, but basically the concept of the Invisible Factory is not that the data is invisible, it's the factory. The owner of the company needs to have the information, and he/she should have the information that he/she needs to drive the business to where they want to take it, and at the same time they need to have the trust that their people are getting the maximum out of the plant. Those are the two objectives of Invisible Factory, and I would say that, again, the message was quite well received.

CEOCFO: *How has the macro economy affected manufacturers? Do they look for better ways, more so when the economy is not as good, or do they start to look when they have a little more money and feel comfortable?*

Ms. DeGasperis: It definitely has an effect on our industry as a whole. When people are trying to hang on to cash, unfortunately IT and automation typically are the first to be cut on the budget. If you have to make payroll or improve efficiency, they're going to opt for payroll or holding on to their cash. It definitely has an impact. Obviously when things are slower and you can review and be thoughtful, procedures and practices would be the optimal time so you can gear back up, but it doesn't always work that way. Usually they need some money, there's usually a driving event that triggers that first step to automation and process improvement.

CEOCFO: *How were you able to help a company when you are implementing something new?*

Ms. DeGasperis: It boils down to methodology. A big part anyways is methodology and ensuring that the appropriate confirmation of the workflow and change has been logged with the user community before it's deployed. IT doesn't equal a hundred percent perfection, it never can, the unknown data gets you from time to time. But a lot, I would say, is methodology and design of our infrastructure so that we're on top of it, we're staffed and we're ready and we've done a good grid assessment in terms of, are we going to have issues in specific areas simply because one group is more resistant to change than another group within the organization? Are we dealing with less than perfect starting information? So there's a number of factors when you're working an environment that you have to assess, and then we align to mitigate the risk.

CEOCFO: *Put it all together for the readers – why use INDUSTRIOS Software?*

Mr. DeGasperis: You went to the right page, Lynn, when you looked at “going beyond technology” because that's really what INDUSTRIOS is about. Our competitors are very large companies, they invest a lot of money, they acquire one another, and there's a constant fight for client acquisition at the detriment of properly planning projects and executing projects, and making sure that in the long run manufacturing firms are going to achieve their objectives, so the INDUSTRIOS, the Invisible Factory is a continuous improvement approach and it's geared towards making sure that customers do improve on a number of fronts on a regular basis.

Ms. DeGasperis: I think one of my most favorite comments and one of the biggest compliments to our firm came from one of our larger corporate groups where we deal with many of our subsidiaries and the VP said, “You know, when we deal with INDUSTRIOS we have the comfort of knowing we're looked after. Yes, will there be days where we have to deal with issues whether it's software or people, but at the end of the day, it's like getting a big hug. We know we're looked after.” And that, to me, speaks volumes to who we are as people and how we run our business over the years. We get things done and we're there to ensure that we're looking after our clients.



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