The hands behind the AI chip: Celadon Systems doubles output with SYSPRO MOM

Industry	Client Since	Solution
Specialty Manufacturing	**2016**	**SYSPRO**

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CELADON™

Mike Follingstad
Director of Engineering
Celadon Systems, Inc.

Walk into Celadon Systems' facility outside Minneapolis and you'll find operators leaning over benches, positioning microscopes and aligning probe needles with the precision and care of bespoke watchmakers. Those needles are the interface between a customer's prototype chip and the test instrument that determines whether the chip works — touching down on pads smaller than a grain of salt, picking up an electrical signal, lifting off. It's exacting work, and around the world, it's mostly still done by people.

That's how Celadon found its niche. The 25-year-old engineer-to-order shop builds custom testing solutions for the most challenging corners of the semiconductor industry — extreme voltage, extreme temperature, the kind of high-performance testing that research labs designing chips for AI and advanced computing depend on.

"We're high-mix, low-volume by design," says Mike Follingstad, Celadon's Director of Engineering. "Our calling card is customer intimacy and the agility to build exactly what each customer needs."

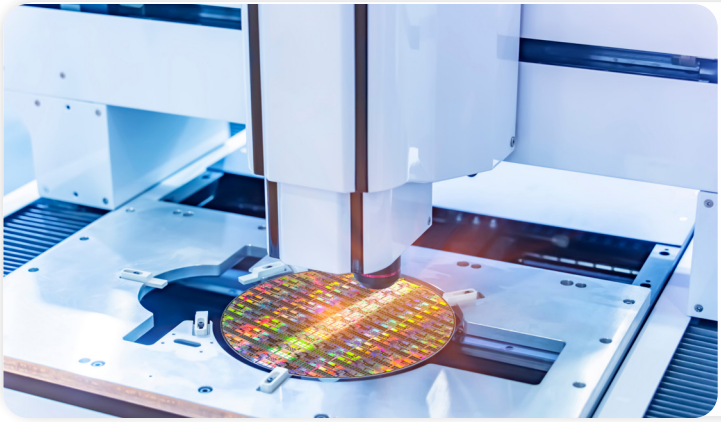
Celadon has nearly doubled its business in the last few years, but the systems that got them here weren't built to take them where they were going. Closing that gap meant leaning harder on BT Partners, the SYSPRO experts who have been advising Celadon for years.

A wedge that opened a heavy door

When Follingstad joined Celadon, the production floor still ran on paper. Work tickets were handwritten, sometimes illegibly. Each packet carried five to ten pages of clean-room printouts, and job documentation lived in Excel files that were hard to search. With three to four hundred jobs on the floor at once, finding one often meant opening folders until something turned up.

Together, Celadon and BT Partners set their sights on SYSPRO MOM — the manufacturing operations management module that handles production scheduling, labor capture, and document control. Follingstad, brought in to lead the implementation, quickly saw a project bigger than the software itself: routings were inconsistent, bills of material had drift, and the data underneath the manufacturing process needed real discipline before MOM could function as designed. With BT Partners' SYSPRO and manufacturing depth alongside him, Follingstad had the partner he needed for a project of that scope.

"MOM became the wedge that opened a very heavy door," Follingstad says. "Once we committed, we had to clean up the data underneath everything — and honestly, that work needed to happen anyway."



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Building it right

Follingstad had implemented MRP systems before and knew that rushing a rollout on a shaky foundation meant rebuilding within a year. BT Partners agreed, drawing on years of SYSPRO and manufacturing operations work.

Over the next two years, BT Partners guided Celadon through the implementation one work center at a time — configuring MOM around the shop's high-mix workflows, tightening routings, levelizing buffers, and building the data discipline a high-mix, low-volume manufacturer needs to scale.

"MOM is a deep system, and it takes time to learn," Follingstad says. "BT Partners was our Sherpa. They knew the mountain — guiding us through the meetings, the training, the troubleshooting. We're still learning the tool, and they're still right there when we need them."

That SYSPRO and manufacturing depth made the difference at every step. Celadon never had to solve a problem twice — the answers were usually already in the room.

Doubling with the same team

Celadon has nearly doubled its revenue without meaningfully growing its production headcount. Operator efficiency, which MOM measures directly, has climbed across the shop, with throughput in some work centers jumping from around 35% to 65%. Documentation-related customer issues, once running at roughly three a month, have dropped to effectively zero.

"We're getting twice the revenue out of the same system," Follingstad says. "We wouldn't have been able to take on this much new business with our transactions buried in a stack of paper."

Much of the lift comes from MOM's Workbench tool, the digital job-board interface between the system and the operators. Each operator has a terminal at their workstation. When a job arrives, they pull it up on Workbench, see what they need, and run the transaction without anyone chasing paperwork.

Drudgery out, artisanship in

For Celadon, the deeper payoff is what MOM has done for the people on the floor, some of whom had pushed for the modernization themselves.

"Nobody likes drudgery work," Follingstad says. "Chasing paperwork, double-entering data — that's a waste of a skilled person's day. There's a lot of talk about AI taking over the drudgery. For us, tools like MOM are taking the transactional friction out of manufacturing. What's left is the work people are actually here to do."

At Celadon, that work is precise, hands-on, and largely unautomatable. By taking friction out of the process, Celadon has put more of its team's attention on the work itself. "We always valued the artisanship," Follingstad says. "MOM cleared away the things getting in the way of it. We were a very good operation before. We're an excellent one now."

Ready for the next climb

With MOM stabilized and the data clean, Celadon is turning to the next phase: capacity analysis using MOM's APS (Advanced Planning and Scheduling) module to balance capacity against demand more precisely as the company grows alongside the AI-driven semiconductor boom. "We're on the cusp of that next level," Follingstad says. "And BT Partners will be there for it, the way they've been there for the last decade."