**Editor's note:** *This article was contributed by the experts at 4GL Solutions.*

# Plate Nesting Integration

*Does your plate nesting software communicate with your ERP system?*

**M**etal service centers that process plate most often use CAD/CAM plate nesting software for plasma, laser, waterjet and oxyfuel cutting. Plate nesting software helps to maximize the yield, minimize waste, increase material savings, boost productivity and lower operating costs. But to truly achieve optimum efficiency, the nesting software must be integrated with the service center's ERP system.

Without integration, the plate nesting software must be manually updated when orders are placed in the ERP system, inventory levels are adjusted or when the drops go back into stock. This two-step approach tends to result in inaccurate inventory information, and thus inefficient plate nesting.

Advanced ERP software like Steel Manager III automatically synchronizes the inventory in the plate nesting software with the ERP system inventory in real time as orders are placed and inventory levels change. After the nest is completed, the plate nesting software automatically passes back the inventory allocated to the ERP system for processing. This eliminates any manual adjustments and results in 100 percent accurate inventory levels in the plate nesting software.

One of the other valuable time-saving features in an advanced ERP system is its ability to capture the plate drop or skeleton that is generated by the plate nesting software. Steel Manager III links that image to the specific plate so that users can see a picture of the plate drop with a click of a mouse. They can then determine whether the drop could be used for another order, resulting in less waste and increased margins.

Plate nesting software, when integrated with ERP software, provides a distinct competitive advantage. ■

*4GL Solutions, Markham, Ontario, offers Steel Manager III, a complete enterprise computing package for steel service centers and processors. For more information, visit www.4glsol.com.*