

Your factory runs on spreadsheets. It doesn't have to.

A plain-English guide to what modern MRP looks like when it is built for small manufacturers — not multinational enterprises.

<h2>BOM</h2> <p>Multi-Level Bills of Materials</p> <p>Including scrap factor and phantom assemblies</p>	<h2>Inventory</h2> <p>Real-Time Stock & Lot Tracking</p> <p>Barcodes, camera scanning, PO receipts</p>	<h2>QC</h2> <p>Checklists with Hard Hold Gate</p> <p>Re-inspection and full audit trail</p>
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Production planning · Work orders · Stock control · Shop floor terminal · Quality assurance · Supplier management · Customer portal

Running a factory on spreadsheets is costing you more than you think.

Most small manufacturers started with a few tabs in Excel. At the time, it made sense. The problem is that a business tracking production, stock, supplier orders and customer deliveries across dozens of linked spreadsheets is not just inefficient — it is fragile. One accidental edit, one absent colleague, one file sent to the wrong person and the whole operation is compromised.

The usual response is more spreadsheets, more manual checks, more time. But piling workarounds on a brittle foundation does not solve the problem. It creates the illusion of control while the real risks — bad stock data, missed QC steps, late deliveries, dissatisfied customers — keep growing quietly in the background.

Stock that lies to you

When stock levels live in a spreadsheet updated by hand, you are always working from yesterday's numbers. Over-ordering ties up cash. Under-ordering stops the line.

Quality problems caught too late

Without a gated QC process, defective batches can reach dispatch. Recalls and rework cost far more than the inspection time you saved.

No visibility on the shop floor

If you cannot see which work order is running on which machine right now, you cannot manage capacity or intervene before a delay becomes a missed deadline.

Customers chasing you for updates

Sales staff fielding order-status calls instead of selling is a direct cost. Customers who feel left in the dark do not stay customers.

"I know what's happening in my business" is not the same as having a system that records it, tracks it and flags problems before they escalate.

The technology that used to require a six-figure implementation project now runs in a browser, costs a fraction of the price and can be configured around how your business already works — not the other way around.

A complete MRP system built for the way small manufacturers actually work.

The SME Cyber Solutions MRP platform brings every core manufacturing process into one connected system. There is no prerequisite training week, no army of consultants and no module you pay extra to unlock. Everything described below is included.

Bills of Materials

Multi-level BOMs with quantity, unit of measure and scrap factor at every level. Phantom assemblies supported. Changes versioned automatically so you always know what was used to build a given lot.

Production Planning & Work Orders

Convert a sales order or forecast into a work order in seconds. Assign routing steps, operators and machines. The system tracks planned vs actual time and flags jobs at risk of missing their due date.

Inventory & Lot Tracking

Live stock levels updated on every receipt, consumption and transfer. Every lot carries a barcode-scannable ID linked to its purchase order, supplier and inspection result. Full traceability from raw material to finished goods.

Quality Control

Inspection checklists copied automatically from reusable templates at work order creation. A hard gate prevents lot release until QC is passed. Re-inspection is supported with a complete audit trail of every result.

Shop Floor Terminal

A kiosk-mode interface lets operators clock in, start and complete work orders, log downtime with reason codes, consume components by scan and submit quality checks — all without touching the main admin system.

B2B Customer Portal

Customers log in to view their own orders, delivery status and documents. Reduces inbound calls, improves perceived service quality and gives your sales team their time back.

Barcode Scanning

All key entities carry Code128 barcodes. Camera and keyboard-wedge scanners both supported, with session-persistent mode toggle.

Supplier Management

Track suppliers, link them to components and purchase orders. Receive against POs with automatic stock updates and lot creation.

Reporting & Audit Trail

Every action is logged. Run stock valuations, production history and QC summaries. Full compliance trail for regulated environments.

Enterprise-grade capability. SME-grade price.

The manufacturing software market broadly splits into two groups. At one end are the enterprise platforms — SAP, Oracle, Infor — that cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to implement and require dedicated IT staff to run. At the other end are basic stock tools that handle inventory but stop well short of full production control.

The mid-market has attracted a newer generation of cloud tools — Katana MRP and MRPeasy among them — which represent a genuine improvement over spreadsheets. They are, however, built on rigid SaaS models: fixed feature sets, per-user pricing that scales uncomfortably as headcount grows and limited flexibility for businesses whose processes sit outside the standard template.

The SME Cyber Solutions MRP platform sits in the gap: the depth of the mid-market tools, without the per-seat invoice or the configuration ceiling.

Feature	SME MRP	Katana MRP	MRPeasy	SAP / NetSuite
Multi-level BOM	YES	YES	YES	YES
Shop floor kiosk / terminal	YES	NO	Partial	YES
QC checklists with hold gate	YES	Partial	YES	YES
Lot traceability	YES	YES	YES	YES
B2B customer portal	YES	NO	NO	YES
Barcode + camera scanning	YES	YES	YES	YES
Subcontracting workflow	YES	Partial	YES	YES
No per-user seat pricing	Yes	NO	NO	NO
Custom process configuration	YES	NO	NO	YES
SME-focused implementation	YES	YES	YES	NO
Implementation cost	Contact us	Self-serve	Self-serve	£50k – £500k+

Competitor feature assessments based on publicly available documentation as of 2025. Specific plan availability varies by tier.

The column that matters most is not the feature list — it is implementation cost. Every row above is included in a single engagement with SME Cyber Solutions, configured to your processes, with no per-seat invoice arriving every time you hire.

Built on proven technology. Hosted on your terms.

The platform runs on a modern Python/Flask stack backed by PostgreSQL, served through nginx and deployable to any Linux VPS or cloud instance. There is no proprietary database format and no mandatory third-party subscription to keep it running. If you want the system on your own infrastructure, that is entirely possible.

Security is not an afterthought. Every action is authenticated and authorised. The customer portal runs on a completely separate authentication layer from staff accounts. Barcode generation happens server-side; camera scanning runs entirely in the browser without sending images to any external service. Your data stays where you put it.

Discovery

We map your current processes — BOMs, stock, production routing, QC steps — and configure the system to reflect how your business works rather than asking you to change to fit the software.

Data Migration

Existing product data, supplier lists, component libraries and opening stock can be imported via CSV. Our AI-assisted import tool maps your columns automatically, removing manual reformatting.

Training & Handover

We train your team in the system — shop floor operators, production managers and admin staff separately. Documentation is built into the platform and accessible at any time without leaving the browser.

Integrations

Xero and QuickBooks accounting integration is in active development. Webhooks and n8n automation connectors are supported for custom workflows. The open API allows connection to any third-party system.

Ready to see it in action?

Book a no-obligation walkthrough using your own product data. We will show you exactly how the system would work for your manufacturing process — no generic demo, no sales script.

neil@smecyber.co.uk

smecybersolutions.com