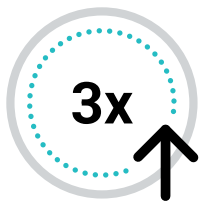




Alliance Machine Systems International Speeds the Delivery of Training and Product Manuals for Global Customers in Up to Four Languages Using MadCap Central Suite

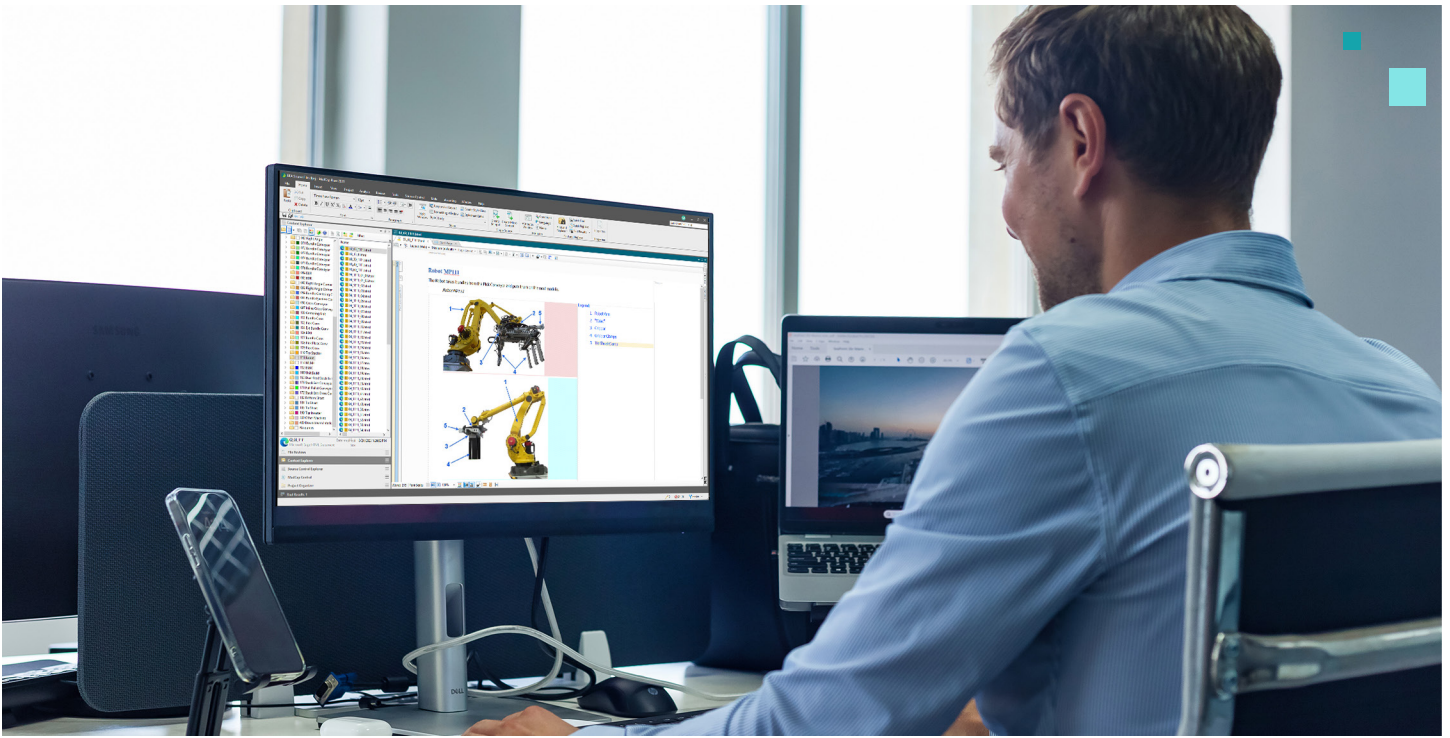


Translate 3x faster
and cut costs by 30%

 <https://www.alliancellc.com/>

 Spokane, WA

Industry: Manufacturing



Benefits

Faster content delivery:

Content reuse features in MadCap Flare enable Alliance to ensure the timely delivery of product manuals and training for 16 machine lines, including 54-plus modules and 92-plus configurations for customers.

Interactive online manuals:

Alliance uses MadCap Flare to produce interactive HTML product manuals that factory operators access via touchscreens on the machines they are using.

Faster, lower-cost translations:

Using MadCap Lingo, Alliance has cut working time on translations by 30% to 75% while reducing costs by 20% to 30%, depending on the product line.

Easier collaboration:

Using MadCap Lingo, Alliance has cut working time on translations by 30% to 75% while reducing costs by 20% to 30%, depending on the product line.

Solutions



madcap®
CENTRAL



madcap®
FLARE



madcap®
LINGO

Alliance Machine Systems International LLC

Alliance Machine Systems International LLC is the global source of innovative products and services that enhance the efficiency and performance of the paperboard packaging industry. For more than 40 years, the company has designed and manufactured 16,000-plus machines for the corrugated box industry, with installations worldwide.

Alliance continuously strives to provide customers with an ever-broadening line of reliable, cost-effective products, including robotic load formers, stackers, pre-feeders, pallet handlers, and specialty folder gluers. To help customers maximize their productivity and safety, the company delivers product documentation that can be accessed via print and on the machines' interactive touchscreens, along with training manuals. For some products, Alliance also offers documentation in Latin American Spanish, Canadian French, and Brazilian Portuguese in addition to English.

Today, Alliance produces its product and training manuals using the MadCap Central Suite from MadCap Software, including MadCap Flare for single-source authoring, MadCap Central for version control and collaboration, and MadCap Lingo for translation.

RAPTOR

Robot MP111

The Robot takes bundles from the Pick Conveyor and puts them on the next module.

Robot MP111

Legend:

1. Robot Arm
2. "Wrist"
3. Gripper
4. Gripper Clamps
5. Tie Sheet Clamp

The joints of the robot arm allow the arm to reach and retract while the "wrist" [#2] at the end of the robot arm [#1] allows the gripper [#3] to rotate. The Robot adjusts the position of the gripper [#3] using the bundle information provided by the camera mounted above the Pick Conveyor.

The gripper clamps [#4] clamp a bundle and move it from the Pick Conveyor to the next module. The "wrist" of the robot [#2] allows the gripper to change the direction of the gripper clamps when picking the bundle and when placing the bundle so a wide variety of stack patterns can be created. .


For a majority of Alliance's products, the company uses MadCap Flare to deliver manuals in two forms: print documents and interactive HTML content on its machines' touchscreens.

Supporting a Broad, Modular Product Portfolio

Alliance's two very large modular systems—a robotic Back End Automation (BEA) system and Plastic Belt Conveyor (PBC) system—are the model of its future; new pre-feeder systems are being developed on a modular design as well. Between them, the BEA and PBC systems have 54 modules and more than 92 configurations. For years, Alliance's technical writing team relied on Adobe Dreamweaver website design software to deliver product manuals for the BEA and PBC systems, but the software was not built to handle the component content management system (CCMS) capabilities Alliance needed.

"I was using Dreamweaver as a rudimentary CCMS solution and was months behind on our manuals because I just could not keep up with the changes," recalled Susan Wensel, a technical writer at Alliance.

Alliance added a second technical writer, Jonathan Hicks, to develop documentation for the company's expanding product portfolio. Jonathan supported the non-BEA and non-PBC machines in Microsoft Word and Adobe FrameMaker. However, the technical writing team also recognized that it was time to adopt software better aligned with their needs.



We probably looked at eight different systems, and MadCap Flare offered the best combination of features, price, and ease of use, and the technical support was outstanding.



SUSAN WENSEL

Technical Writer
Alliance Machine Systems
International LLC

As soon as they had access to the new software, the technical writing team began importing content from Dreamweaver, Microsoft Word, and Adobe FrameMaker into MadCap Flare and then prioritized building the product manuals for Alliance's most widely used machine modules. Within a year, the team had product manuals for all 16 active machine lines available via MadCap Flare.

"We were under pressure to produce results very quickly, and using MadCap Flare, we were able to take a modular approach to completing the migration that ensured we could keep all our active machine lines supported," Susan explained.

Putting Product Manuals at Workers' Fingertips

For a majority of Alliance's products, the company uses MadCap Flare to deliver manuals in two forms: print documents and interactive HTML content on its machines' touchscreens. Currently, when users hit the Help button on the "machine manual" touchscreen, which uses an old version of Microsoft Internet Explorer, it takes them to the landing page of the manual. In the near future, as Alliance moves to new touchscreens with Google Chrome, the technical writing team will be able to add search bars and context-sensitive navigation to its machine manuals.

"Many print manuals end up in a manager's office where the operators can't access them, but when the product manual is on the machine, it is always right there at their fingertips," Susan said. "Today, operators can get to the home page of our Flare-based machine manual on their touchscreens and then use a series of sidebars to navigate to the information they need. Once we move to the new touchscreens running Chrome, we'll be able to take advantage of

Flare's skins and advanced features for search and context-sensitive Help to create an even more intuitive experience."

Alliance also plans to expand the machine manuals' use of multimedia. Presently, the technical writing team relies on still images, which they modify using MadCap Capture, to illustrate how to use the machines. Moving forward, the team is looking at using MadCap Flare to embed video and automation graphics in the machine manuals.

"Many of our customers' employees are hands-on people who don't want to look at a wall of text, so we're looking at multiple ways to present information," Susan notes. "We see a great deal of promise in embedding video and automations into our Flare-based content, so users can see exactly how the machine can be used."

One enhancement to the customer's experience is what they don't see: broken or misdirected links, Susan adds: "In the past, I spent days trying to run down all the broken links, and I was told they were fixed, but the links didn't always go to the right place. Now, I set up a link in Flare and know it's working, and if I move files around, Flare automatically adjusts the links. That's really huge."

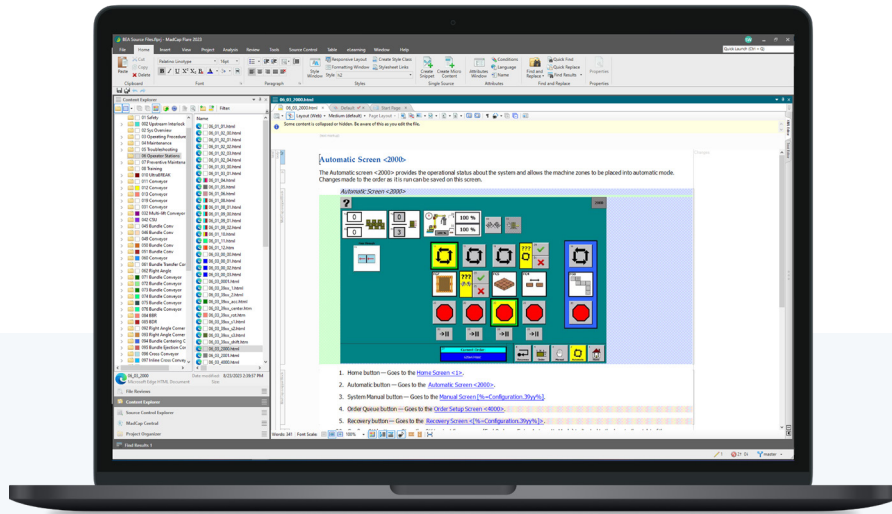


When the product manual is on the machine, it is always right there at their fingertips. Today, operators can get to the home page of our Flare-based machine manual on their touchscreens and then use a series of sidebars to navigate to the information they need.



SUSAN WENSEL

Technical Writer
Alliance Machine Systems
International LLC



The Alliance technical writing team relies on MadCap Flare's functionality for managing parent and child projects and reusing content via snippets, conditions and variables

Keeping Pace with Machine Updates and Customer Demand

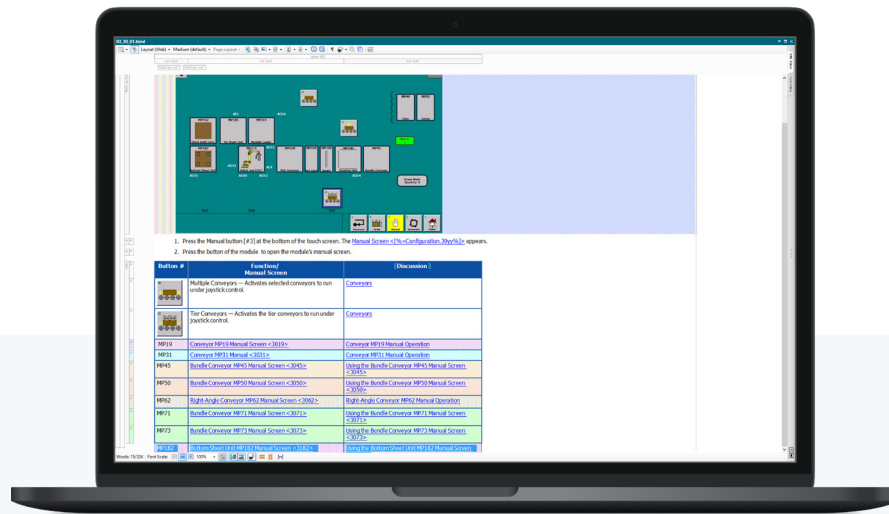
The Alliance technical writing team needs to address two dimensions in delivering product manuals on time. One is the need to deliver updated documentation anytime the company introduces a new machine or product enhancements. The other is the need to customize manuals for customers based not only on the configurations they use but also customer-specific details. To keep pace with these demands, the team relies on MadCap Flare's functionality for managing parent and child projects and reusing content via snippets, conditions and variables

"Using Flare to maintain parent and child projects is very easy, and it maximizes my ability to propagate changes while ensuring consistency," Susan explains, "For example, I have a parent Flare project, and when I need a manual for a particular configuration, I create a child project, which I modify using

snippets and variables in Flare. Later, if I need to update documentation for a module, I make the changes in the parent project, and it automatically populates the child project the next time I publish it."

Alliance's technical writers typically use conditions in MadCap Flare to manage configuration-specific information about the machines and modules being used, as well as to indicate whether a manual will appear in print, on a touchscreen, or both. Meanwhile, variables are applied to make customer name and customer address changes. Perhaps the most extensively used features for reuse in MadCap Flare are snippets to conditionalize images and ensure that product descriptions and warning text are consistent across different manuals.

"We have put all of our required warning statements into Flare snippets, so all of our warning text is fully standardized," Susan explains. "That means, if our manual says, 'Do not enter the hazard area without lockout,' it is the same in all manuals, and that is important from a legal standpoint as well as protecting our customers."



The Alliance technical writing team uses MadCap Flare to pull screenshots, images, and other content from a parent project into a child project using a combination of conditions and snippets.

Repurposing Content to Create Training Manuals

Recently, Alliance has begun taking advantage of the content reuse enabled by MadCap Flare to produce training manuals that complement the product documentation. These training resources help users to get up and running quickly while the product manuals provide more detailed information about machinery features and processes for using the machines. Because the training manuals effectively provide a subset of information, the technical writing team uses MadCap Flare to pull screenshots, images, and other content from a parent project into a child project using a combination of conditions and snippets.

“For example, we have different modules that are affected by our hazardous energy lockout procedure,” Susan notes. “In our training manual, we have a slightly abbreviated version of the procedure because they don’t need all the detail that is included in the product documentation.

In this way, we’re delivering the right level of information to customers based on their current needs.”

Susan adds, “Our service team has been very happy that we are able to provide product and training documents much faster with information that is consistent across all our manuals, and it’s all possible because of Flare.”



With MadCap Lingo, we’ve been able to cut our working time on translations by 30% to 75% while reducing our costs by 20% to 30%, depending on the product line.



SUSAN WENSEL

Technical Writer
Alliance Machine Systems
International LLC

Reducing Translation Costs and Time with MadCap Lingo

In addition to producing manuals in English, Alliance's Spokane, Washington office regularly translates content into three languages: Latin American Spanish, Canadian French, and Brazilian Portuguese. Since adopting MadCap Flare, the company has also implemented, MadCap Lingo, to complete these translations.

An advanced computer-aided translation (CAT) tool for technical authors, documentation teams, and translators, MadCap Lingo is fully integrated with MadCap Flare, providing a seamless process from content creation to localization. Additionally, the translation memory in MadCap Lingo allows the Alliance team to reuse previously translated content, reducing the time and costs required to produce new translations.

"Some of our BEA manuals and training documents, in particular, run close to 1,000 pages long," Susan observes. "With MadCap Lingo, we've been able to cut our working time on translations by 30% to 75% while reducing our costs by 20% to 30%, depending on the product line. And our field service really likes the fact that we can now translate our training documents and product manuals as a single bundle, since they no longer need to provide local translations."

Simplifying Collaboration with MadCap Central

All MadCap Flare-based product and training manuals are now uploaded to the cloud-based MadCap Central platform, which serves as the Alliance team's backup repository and version control. MadCap Central also holds all of the technical writing team's project administration documents, which explain where to find all of the major assets related to a given project, such as content files, snippets, and images. In addition to administration documents for individual projects, the technical writing team also maintains the "Alliance Technical Administration" document, which includes the company style guide and information the team has acquired about how to use MadCap Flare and MadCap Lingo.

"Storing our manuals and project administration documents on MadCap Central makes it much easier for our team to collaborate," Susan says. "Recently, I needed help catching up on documentation for our plastic bulk conveyors, and I was able to transfer the project over to a colleague who had some capacity. Because he could access the current content and the supporting project administration document on MadCap Central, he was able to pick up the project quickly."

Susan adds, "Last year, we were months behind on our product manuals. Today, not only are we able to work ahead on these manuals; we've also added the training documents. MadCap Software has been a lifesaver!"

Get Started on a Free-30-Day Trial

Today at [MadCapSoftware.com](https://www.madcapsoftware.com)

