

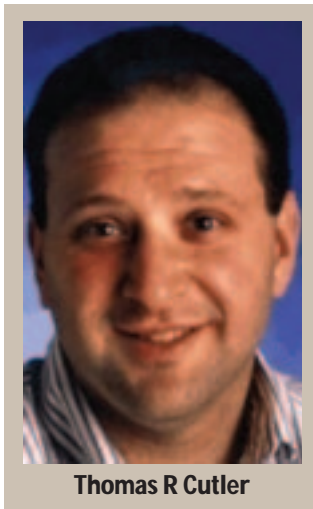
Manage your business process workflow

Many difficulties in business process management relate to "off-system" manual tasks, such as notification, investigation, authorisation, and follow up. The ability to automate business process through the use of workflow templates make it easier to control and administer stated processes through the necessary steps.

A flow or process may have been documented outside of an ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system, where there is no formal way to ensure compliance. In the past, paper documents and unmanaged email have provided the best solutions, but with no controls to ensure visibility and compliance, the value was limited. According to Stephen Carson, Executive Vice-President of Visibility Corporation, "The .net workflow system enforces the process. This allows companies to improve and standardise daily functions across the company without burdensome manual administration. This provides employees visibility into the status of "in-process" tasks, making it easier for them to execute their tasks effectively."

In "make-to-stock" environment, business processes can remain stable and unchanged for many years, or until a new product line is developed. In a "to-order" environment business processes are significantly influenced by the nature of the order or contract being executed. Not only can each order or contract involve different type of process, but the value of contracts can have a significant influence.

Automating business processes streamlines business operations thus minimising overhead costs and forcing disciplines based on best practices. Together this helps preserve the integrity of the business data and ensures the users of the ERP system adhere to the process that are set by the business. Process compliance assures the best value for the business efforts, helps to contain costs and maintain the value of corporate data. Carson notes, "Process flow mapping and tracking of business events guarantees that employees are automatically notified when important events occur, or when a transaction requires input. This ensures



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that cycle times of critical and complex business process are optimised."

Some of the challenges faced with growing "to-order" manufacturers include:

- Rapid expansion and addition of new facilities
- Increasing variety of manufactured products
- Requirement to achieve and sustain for full ISO 9000 quality system certification
- Need to reconcile disparate paper and electronic systems and tools used to plan, measure and manage quality control
- Need to reduce costs and maintain or improve product quality

Carson suggests that Visibility's Quality Workbench provides all of the following

immediately accessible benefits:

- Real-time workflow & event driven corrective action reporting and action system
- Integrated tool usage history traceability and management
- On-line real time access to all revision controlled manufacturing process and quality assurance system documentation
- Employee skills management for training and assured matching of employee skills to job requirements
- Comprehensive product quality attribute data collection, reporting and management from incoming inspection through to final work in process receipt

Many complex manufacturers fully implement Quality Workbench across the entire organisation as the core of the quality control and management system.

Single point process documentation implementation and maintenance: Quality Workbench provides the tools to define and capture best practices for individual processes that are used across many shop floor control routings and business processes. By storing this information once and associating these best practices with many routings and functions, manufacturers are able to insure that the current best practices are available, being employed, and are easily be updated and maintained. This dramatically im-

proves repeatability and consistency of common practices in very different types of contract projects.

■ **Incoming inspection quality attribute definition and data collection:** Quality Workbench enhances incoming inspection capabilities by allowing users to define part number, supplier and warehouse specific attributes for data collection at the point of incoming inspection. Parts subject to incoming inspection with defined quality attributes must have all attribute data collected before final receipt is allowed. This enables active monitoring of part and supplier performance and the information necessary for immediate corrective actions.

■ **Tool definition, maintenance, calibration and quality standards:** Tool calibration and maintenance facilities are utilised within Quality Workbench to control and maintain tool use. The links that are established between the bill of material components, engineering routing operations and tooling, allow tool use to be controlled and tracked to assure that only "in-calibration" tooling and equipment are employed in an operation.

■ **ISO Certification Audit support:** The document management features of Quality Workbench and integrated data

collection capabilities are invaluable in both managing the details of quality throughout the organisation, as well as demonstrating these practices for certification. Carson noted that, "Clients have been able to pass a full ISO Audit at three different locations in a single day."

■ **Lowered cost of quality implementation and production:** The links from Quality Workbench touched every aspect of the ERP system and the complex manufacturer's business processes. The full implementation provides the functionality required to design, implement, and cost effectively maintain a high-performance quality system. The system provides the proven benefits of an effective quality management system by helping to lower production costs and improve quality, and also significantly lowers the cost of managing quality across the organisation. **2.0**

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