



It's a tremendous time saver and greatly enhances good will with our customers being able to respond so quickly to their requests.

Dan Goldberg, L-3 Telemetry-East
Senior Supply Chain Manager

Facts at a glance

Solution: ERP

Products: VISUAL

Industry: Aerospace and Defense

Country: USA

About the company

L-3 Telemetry-East/Global Network Solutions is a division of L-3 Communications, a leading prime defense contractor in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), and secure communications. L-3 Telemetry-East provides products in three major airborne telemetry product areas: RF products, advanced data acquisition products, and ground products used in aircraft and missile flight test and ground receiver markets.

The company manufactures to exacting quality standards to meet stringent safety and reliability requirements of its products. Fundamental to this is tight lot tracking and traceability of all components over the full lifecycle of all products – from sourced raw materials to finished products in the field. Traceability requirements are especially demanding to readily respond to government alerts to OEMs considering use and reliability of components when performance and reliability questions arise.

“Having the information available in minutes greatly reduces the scope of a recall and the impact on our customers and greatly reduces the costs associated with such a recall, and the costs of replacement parts. Most importantly, it enables us to maintain a very high level of good will with our customers.”

Challenges

The company implemented VISUAL ERP in October 2005 to replace an antiquated homegrown system that required manual traceability of stored paper documents. Such an effort typically took weeks to complete, consuming hundreds of hours. Today, using VISUAL ERP, the company can definitively respond to an alert in a matter of minutes, with the system showing every product sold and in place in the field, as well as products in production that have components in question in their bills-of-material. Safety, quality, and reliability is greatly enhanced at a fraction the cost incurred before.

Due to the demand for superior reliability of products, L-3 Telemetry-East is required to track and trace every component that goes into every product. The company's highly sophisticated line of airborne telemetry products are vastly complex systems comprised of hundreds – sometimes thousands – of critical components. Being an aerospace and defense contractor, the company must be able to respond to alerts the government regularly puts out on various components and products; and be able to thoroughly and accurately vet the history of products it has built to determine if any components in question were used in one of its products.



Getting business specific.

In addition, the company also needs to be able to readily determine where components have been consumed in work-in-process when quality test shows intermittent component failure. “This is the most aggravating,” says Dan Goldberg, L-3 Telemetry-East Senior Supply Chain Manager. “We may have purchased it from a number of different suppliers, and you have to identify which lot and supplier is responsible for the problem.”

“You can’t eliminate complexity, but you can master it to gain a powerful competitive edge.”

“We were performing that search manually before,” he says. “We would have to stop production to search through the inventory, often part by part, in order to ensure we weren’t using the part in question. And then we’d have to go through paper records that we kept stored off site to determine if we ever used it.”

The onerous task was vastly simplified and streamlined with the implementation of VISUAL ERP that provides a robust lot track and trace capability. The system requires workers to record where components are consumed in orders flowing through the plant, but the fractional increased effort pays

huge dividends over the long term. This is because the consumption to a specific order is tied back to the specific manufacturing lot data code (LDC) that gets entered into the system with receipt of inventory from the supplier. There is broad flexibility for what data can be associated with the code, including manufacturer’s name, plant location, receipt date, and expiration date – if there is one, and any number of other critical factors. Items are assigned individual unique trace ID numbers as well.

Seeing results.

“Using part trace maintenance, we can view online at a glance all trace IDs assigned to that part ID. You can see how many parts are left in stock, and the LDC assigned at the time the lot was received from the supplier,” Goldberg says. “You can see everywhere the part was used in a tree-like view up to final assembly, tracing it backwards and forwards, determining whether it was purchased or fabricated.”

“Users can also see how many from that lot are still in inventory to ensure they’re quarantined to avoid using them as replacement parts. If the product has been already shipped to a customer, it is easy to specifically pinpoint recall or service replacements in the field.”

“If you had to do it manually, depending on the number of times the part was used, and the number of levels in the bills-of-material, the scope of the impact could be huge,” Goldberg says. “Having the information available in minutes greatly reduces the scope of a recall and the impact on our customers. And it greatly reduces the costs associated with such a recall, and the costs of replacement parts. Most importantly, it enables us to maintain a very high level of good will with our customers.”

There Is A Better Way

At Synergy, we work with a core belief. We believe in the customer. We believe that the customer is seeking a better, more collaborative relationship with its business software provider. And a new breed of business software: created for evolution, not revolution. Software that’s simple to buy, easy to deploy, and convenient to manage.

There is a better way.