UPC, a subsidiary of Goodrich Aerospace
Quality Control Cuts Cycle Time (From Weeks to Minutes)

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RICK TODD
VICE PRESIDENT OF QUALITY AT UPC

There was a time when it was common for one company to have multiple employees filing, copying, and routing paper documents. In fact, you might still be one of these companies. Your paper documents might take days to work their way through the company, making it days before everyone has access to them.

Take Universal Propulsion Co. (UPC) Inc. for example. UPC is a subsidiary of Goodrich Aerospace located in Fairfield, CA. The company had two full-time employees handling its documents – in fact, the company was about to hire a third employee. That is, before it was introduced to VISUAL ERP.

Documentation Is Critical

Quality control and the associated document handling requirement are critical issues for UPC. "Since we build explosive devices, we can't test every item. Customers must trust the quality of our operations," says Rick Todd, Vice President of Quality at UPC. "Because of that, documentation of what we build is critical, and so is the accuracy of that

documentation. The ability to control all the different quality-related documents is one of the most important challenges we face."

In the past, UPC managed these documents manually. "It took longer than we wanted to find information, and since these records were filed manually, there was a chance they could be misplaced," says Todd. UPC had recently replaced its aging, mainframe-based inventory control and order entry software with an integrated, Windows-based enterprise resources planning (ERP) system, VISUAL ERP.

Installation Profile:

Technology User: Universal Propulsion Co. (UPC) Inc. located in Fairfield, CA is a subsidiary of Goodrich Aerospace and manufactures devices for aerospace and military applications.

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Problem:

The documentation and accuracy of the products UPC builds is critical. However, UPC was manually processing these documents.

Solution:

UPC implemented three of VISUAL's 16 different Quality modules – Calibration, Document Management, and Nonconformance Management.

When UPC learned that VISUAL also had an entire quality management system – VISUAL Quality – it evaluated the modules as a solution to its document management problems.

Step-By-Step Implementation

UPC initially considered three VISUAL Quality modules for implementation – Calibration, Document Management, and Nonconformance Management (NCM). Calibration was the first area that UPC automated. The company tracks nearly 5,700 gauges and other devices, keeping records regarding purchase and installation history, latest calibration, and when the next calibration is due.

The VISUAL Calibration module replaces an in-house DOS program that according to Todd, did not have good reporting capabilities. The next area that UPC automated was document management. The engineering and document control departments use the software to maintain 5,000 of the company's CAD drawings and almost 21,700 manufacturing and test procedures.

An interface to VISUAL makes document and drawing numbers available to manufacturing applications. The third module to be implemented was NCM. A nonconforming report may be generated by a customer, supplier, or in-house personnel. Previously, the report went through the mail to the appropriate engineer who specified the disposition in handwriting on the form. The form traveled back to the quality inspector who carried out the disposition.

When that was done, the six-part form was disseminated to the affected departments. With VISUAL Quality's Nonconformance Management module, all of this now happens electronically. The information is stored on the Windows server and is available to any employee with a PC. This alone has reduced the cycle time for handling nonconforming reports from weeks to minutes.

UPC continues to implement additional quality modules and will be doing so the next year and a half until all process are completely automated.