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Business Processes

Turning Returns Around

SERANIN'S MOTERA SOFTWARE LETS BEARING MAKER MONITOR EVERY PRODUCT RETURN IN REAL TIME

MARTY MONTAGUE is quick to boast when he and his department succeed. He's also not afraid to own up to mistakes and fix them.

So when the quality-management director at Koyo USA, a maker of ball and roller bearings, discovered serious problems in the system that handled the company's product returns—a process that might last from one to three months—he took action. He implemented Seranin Software Corp.'s Motera software, a real-time process-monitoring and measurement system that Koyo uses to track returns, identify errors (such as incorrect orders) more quickly to cut delays, and help reallocate staff to troubleshoot problems. The time it takes to process returns has been cut by a third.

Before implementing the software, "we were getting customer complaints based on customer complaints," Montague says. In some cases, customers couldn't buy products because

their credit lines were tied up with the products they were trying to return. "We were getting nailed in customer surveys," he says.

With Motera, everyone from customer-service reps to upper management can log on to the system and check the status of every return. The software stamps times and dates on all activities, so each return is automatically monitored from beginning to end. If backups occur, icons on the user's screen flash red; green flashes when things are running smoothly.

Analysis tools highlight how different types of returns take longer to process and where they're being held up, enabling Koyo to more accurately allocate staff to address the issues.

KEEPING TABS ON PRODUCT RETURNS

>> Vendor: Seranin Software

>> Product: Motera

>> Functions: Business-process modeling, integration, and measurement

>> Features: Intuitive GUI, modeling tools, simulation capabilities, and tools to estimate activity-based costs

>> Price: Depends on configuration

>> Availability: Now

The software is tied to staff performance and salaries. "Now we can break [holdups] into logical errors and set goals so that part of the bonus compensation is for hitting targets," Montague says. Because the software can be integrated with numerous backend applications, it was linked to Koyo's legacy system to have access to product data, he says.

Koyo spent \$60,000 on the software, and though Montague can't measure the system's value in dollars, the return on investment is clear. "Did we see a cost reduction? I can't say yes to that, but we saw the improvement in customer satisfaction that I needed to see."

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