

THOSE SUPPORT

People

Volume 8, Issue 3

Enterprise Optimization

by Chuck Combs



Spring, 2002

Consider Re- Implementation

by Rob Gentry

Is Your Company doing things right or (more importantly) doing right things?

Enterprise Optimization Technology has become a very important tool to help management make important business decisions that can increase their company's competitive advantage. Optimization allows managers of sales, marketing, production, and finance to look at the future and see exactly what their best possible profits can be and how each product, customer, production line and plant can contribute to earnings and return on assets.

Management knows it must find ways to improve performance. In most cases, the search is for ways to do things right. But even more important is to discover the right things to do. Consider the following:

Doing things right (Simple Opportunities)

- Reducing waste and related cost
- Improving productivity
- Improving yield
- Improving maintenance
- Improving training

Doing right things (Complex Opportunities)

- Optimum use of capital
- Optimum use of procurement sources
- Optimum use of production capabilities
- Optimum use of market opportunities

(See Optimization, page 7)

I think it's safe to say that a new day has dawned on our little niche of the industry, considering the events that have happened over the past several months. Specifically, we must all adjust to the November announcement from HP and their subsequent 2006 "line in the sand" concerning the HP 3000 and its support, and the recent acquisition of Interbiz by SSA Global Technologies. These events are raising issues about the future that can't be put off much longer.

The new day dawning at your company refers to the analysis that you are, or will soon be making, of your MANMAN system. The Twenty Million Dollar Question is, "Do we leave MANMAN and migrate

(See Re-Implementation, page 6)

Trusted Advisor A Broad Spectrum of Manufacturing Systems Expertise?

Our company has worked with hundreds of manufacturing companies during the past eight years of supporting MANMAN. We have helped companies with managers and users who knew all about how to use their manufacturing management system and others who knew almost nothing about it. The range of management styles and methods is astonishing, as a real-world example will illustrate.

In 1982, when I was technical support manager in ASK's Houston office, I answered an interesting phone call from a prospect one day. We had a relatively small office (I was the only one working in the office through lunch) and the caller wanted to speak to someone in Sales. I offered to take a message, telling him I was on the support line

(See Trusted Advisor, page 4)

From Shaggy's Desk

So, what next?! First HP tells us no more HP3000 and now CA sells InterBiz software (MANMAN, MK, and MAXCIM) to SSA Global Technologies! I don't know about you but I can hardly wait to get to the CAMUS Conference and meet these guys. Do you think they will have Dwarfs in Sunglasses to spy on us? Let's all meet in Denver May 19-22 at the CAMUS International Conference so we can get together and go to the presentations from SSA and the InterBiz group and find out just what they have planned for MANMAN in the coming years. Since SSA's primary product objectives are related to manufacturing and software systems that support manufacturing operations, let's hope it's a good move for the MANMAN users' community.

I got to attend the Midwest RUG meeting in March in Naperville, IL. I want to send out a hearty THANK YOU to them for changing the location from the CA office so tSGi was allowed to attend (for the first time). At the meeting there was an interesting announcement from InterBiz that they are investigating porting MANMAN to Unix! I wonder if SSA is continuing that needless move?

The focus of the meeting was Shop Floor Data Collection. There were presentations from Casco Development and Peripheral Software and then Warren Smith, president of CAMUS, showed a presentation of DANA/Victor Reinz's "Homegrown Data Collection System" that was very interesting. Dave Burrell made a good point in the breakout sessions about how important it is to do a re-implementation of your software every 2 to 3 years. You have to keep training your users on the proper use of your software. Remember, as personnel come and go, so do the original rules of use. (Rob has written an article on this so look for it in this newsletter.) At the end of the day a lot of nice prizes were raffled off. I want to encourage you all to attend your local RUG meetings. Who knows, we may just show up to buy the lunch. And thank you, Terri, for having us. You did a great job!

We've never given a presentation on Shop Floor Control, but we are now working with a company, Tamlin Software, which has a great software package we can show you. It's called Manufacturing Conductor and it offers Shop Floor Control solutions to small and mid-range manufacturers and distributors. Tamlin Software is a wonderful group of people to work with and we feel this partnership will go a long way. The Tamlin team is like the tSGi team in that they care about you and your manufacturing business and will go out of their way to make sure you get the right product for your company. If the fit's not right, they will be the first to tell you so. Like us, they are a customer-intimate organization, always striving to improve the quality of life for their customers.

Their product, Manufacturing Conductor, is Shop Floor Control software that helps manufacturing operations by providing real-time visibility, capturing Quality Control data, and providing data to scheduling. Having shop floor control means having visibility of the work-in-process that must be converted into finished goods. Capturing real-time information helps identify bottlenecks and allows for working around them, which helps production meet schedules efficiently. Eliminating errors and reducing lost time is essential for business productivity and revenue. After all, redundancy can cost a pretty penny! Because MC tracks, organizes, and reports all jobs, parts, and work orders, it supports quality initiatives like ISO 9000/9001 by automating quality procedures and inspections. And all of this can be optionally accomplished in a totally paperless environment with Manufacturing Conductor.

All raw materials are identified in Manufacturing Conductor as they are released to the plant floor. All parts are then bar-coded for tracking. As components and subassemblies move through the manufacturing processes, each movement is tracked and pertinent data is captured. Manufacturing Conductor can help you answer questions such as: Machine processing time: how long was it worked on? Operator labor hours: who worked on it? and, Where is it right now? Other Quality Inspection information can also be captured.

The status of each part can be viewed with the added capability of Exception Management for scrap and rework. Since re-worked or scrapped parts and materials can prove to be a significant operating expense,

Manufacturing Conductor can help manage and reduce these expenses. And because it was designed with an open architecture, it can be customized to meet specific needs with source code modifications to help meet the specific requirements of your users' needs.

Engineering drawings and specifications are built into Manufacturing Conductor's routers, meaning that users can see the product specifications and engineering drawings. As each work order travels from operation to operation, it takes the correct processing procedures, instructions and drawings with it, making it available to the floor. If all of this sounds good to you, stop by our booth at CAMUS or give us a call.

David Byrns of Summit System has a new enhancement, a Quotation System for MANMAN. With it you can perform streamlined entry and maintenance of Quotes. You can also create letters based on templates that you design. The Quotation system allows you to quickly and easily add or change over 25 elements of your quote, without having to use the cumbersome OM, MA, 140 transaction. It contains quotation entry and change features not available in OMAR. In addition, the Quotation System includes a flexible feature which allows you to tailor your quote into a formal business letter that you can email, fax or mail to your customers.

The conversational Quote Entry and Changes feature includes an easy-to-use question and answer style for entering a quote. You can enter a quote without the ship-to customer or new part number being set up ahead of time. You can change the Ship-to customer or the product number without deleting and re-adding. It offers optional automatic assignment of quotation numbers and you can renumber the quote's line items or perform changes to a "range" of lines.

With the Quotation Letters and Lists feature you can create customizable Letter Templates, allowing you to create business documents based on the quote that you can then send to your customers. Substitutable fields such as customer's name, address, fax number, and quotation elements allow you to insert the details of the quote into the template of a business letter that you have composed.

The Quotation List Command LI, 680 gives the ability to view and print the quote without using the unformatted UT, 740 view. The Quotation System uses the MANMAN Quotation database and is fully compatible with the other MANMAN Quotation Commands. If you are interested call me and I will be happy to order you a demo.

I really do hope to have the opportunity to visit with you in Denver. I know we will have so much to discuss! 'Til then, bye y'all, see you next issue.

Turn Your Boat Anchor Into an Asset

by John Simonich

Throughout the rapid changes in the MANMAN/HP3000 landscape over the last year, the Support Group, inc. has remained constantly focused on responding to our customers' needs. For this reason, we have created our Level IV/B Audit Response/Open Access service for those companies no longer using MANMAN in a production capacity.

We have seen companies who migrated off of MANMAN let their ancient HP3000 (boat anchor) sit in the corner until a need arises to access historical information. When this happens, the former MANMAN users find that they lack the skills and resources needed to effectively and efficiently respond to such requests. To fill that void we now offer a Level IV/B Audit Response/Open Access service.

In short, we host the 3000 at our facility and respond to either requests for access (where you search the data), or requests for specific information (where we compile a report based on your needs). We'll even completely handle all outside audit requests that present themselves if you desire. Either way, we respond specifically to your needs and do so in a cost-effective way. If your HP3000 is or may become a boat anchor and you would like more information about this service, please contact us at **1-800-798-9862** or send your request to jsimonich@supgrp.com. ❖



More Changes for the MANMAN/HP3000 Community

by Donnie Poston

SSA Global Technologies has purchased Interbiz from CA. Hewlett Packard is stopping production of the HP 3000 in 2003. So what will you do now? My answer is a question: What do YOU want to do? There is a lot of uncertainty in the MANMAN community these days about the future of your IT applications and platforms. Vendors are throwing out every solution THEY think you should adopt. I think it's more important for you to tell the vendors what YOU want.

the Support Group, inc. is here to listen. Do you want to continue running MANMAN on the HP3000 for as long as possible? Do you want to keep your old HP3000 and/or buy a new A or N Class e3000? Do you want to migrate the applications and the platforms? Do you want to convert to Unix or to Windows? Or maybe even Linux? You really have many options available. The best option is the one that works for YOU.

If you want to continue running MANMAN, we offer hardware upgrades, support, consulting, training, bolt-on software, and modifications. We are prepared to keep our customers running on MANMAN for a long time. What about the HP3000 and support? Many of our customers found third-party HP3000 support a viable alternative to HP's support even before last November's announcement of the end of support on the 3000. Others have purchased new e3000's since January. We can guide you in your own direction for your own situation when it comes to hardware and support.

On a similar note, many companies are opting to purchase the new A and N Class systems as a way to enhance their current environments with the latest technology. 2006 is still a long way off. If you plan to migrate away from MANMAN, we know from experience that unless you are already well down the migration road, you may have 2-4 years before your migration will be complete. Thus, you will be running MANMAN for some time. And chances are, your new application will run on Unix.

With a new A or N Class e3000, you will greatly enhance the performance of your existing platform environment, with the added bonus of upgrading that same box to a Unix server free-of-charge from Hewlett Packard.

If migration is in your future, tSGi has been heavily involved with many MANMAN users in deciding their future path. Again, from experience we know that having a partner who knows your current environment is a huge asset when migrating to a new system. As you may know from our announcements and mass mailings last December, our ENTSGO division and HP have teamed up with IFS. In the near future you will learn how that relationship is growing. For those of you with fewer than 32 active users, tSGi has teamed with Tamlin Software to offer complete turnkey migrations from MANMAN on HP to a variety of solutions on Intel/Microsoft.

Bottom line, the Support Group is one of the few companies MANMAN users can count on for guidance and support no matter which path you wish to follow. Don't be confused or frightened by the latest news in the MANMAN/HP3000 community. You have options and we are here to help you find what's right for YOU. ♦

Trusted Advisor

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(in the days before ASK's first response center), but he told me he had technical questions, so began describing his situation.

A start-up company whose Chairman was a friend of ASK's Chairman wanted to be able to run MANMAN on IBM PC's. PC's were new and although I had built a kit computer in 1978, I'd never touched an IBM PC; we were still happy to have an "online" terminal. The caller said they had about 40 employees but they had really big plans. But MANMAN on DOS? It was obvious why I was not in Sales when I couldn't control a long laugh and an, "Oh, yeah, right, like that's going to happen!"

I was sure, back in 1982, that there was no way MANMAN was going to be re-written to run on PC's in the next five years and I told him so. Within a few weeks Compaq had purchased MANMAN using the HP3000 on the ASKNET service bureau and I had programmed the IBM PC to dial up (at 300 baud!), connect, and run MANMAN on the screen. Within the next 2 months many MANMAN

experts were working for Compaq in Houston (quite a few actually). Who were these guys?

Compaq surprised us all, but what was most impressive from my perspective was how almost everyone they hired was an APICS member—even the people not directly involved in manufacturing, and especially the MIS people. By 1986 there were several hundred people in MIS at Compaq, counting contractors, and it was obvious to everyone that Compaq was a different kind of company from the other MANMAN users in Houston.

By the time I left ASK near the end of 1985, there were dozens of companies in the Houston area running MANMAN on HP3000's and the local ASK Users Group was very active, driven mainly by Compaq's interests. Everyone benefited: the users, managers, and owners, as well as ASK. Compaq and ASK believed strongly in education, training, and participation in community associations. Those were the good old days.

Compaq was very successful with MANMAN all the way into the early 1990's as we watched other companies fail to learn their lessons for continuous improvement and experimentation. Dozens of companies must have visited Compaq in their first 10 years of using MANMAN and many of those visitors must have gone back to their homes and wondered how such innovation could be fostered in their own companies.

I've been thinking for a long time now about the differences between Compaq and most of the other companies that used MANMAN way back then, and a couple of key points have come to mind. Compaq knew how to define what "success" meant to them. They expected a lot from their manufacturing system and they pushed it far beyond its original design specs. Although they did no mods in the beginning on their original pre-4.0 version, by the time they brought their processing in-house from ASKNET to their own datacenter, they had done quite a few FORTRAN changes that I helped them convert to 6.0. After that they enhanced it almost beyond recognition.

I think Compaq's focus on highly qualified MIS/IT people was a major key to their success. Their MIS/IT people knew business, applications systems, and technology! When they had only 40 employees, they knew they would never find an off-the-shelf

package to handle all of their needs. They were looking for a 70% solution and planned to create the rest of it themselves. By the time they were through, in the late 1990's, I was calling it PAQMAN instead of MANMAN. They stayed on the 6.0 Release until the end when they converted to SAP, but their version was far more advanced in most ways than today's Release 12.

I've been writing about self-sufficiency in these pages for eight years now and here I go again. Our Level II support contracts were developed because our original support pricing model was built on the premise that every MANMAN site we would be helping would, like Compaq, have someone who knew at least a few things about MANMAN and MPE. That turned out to be a false assumption.

Although there were some small companies using MANMAN without an MIS department in the 1980's, by the mid-1990's the percentage of even medium-sized companies with no manufacturing systems expertise at all was growing. We found it difficult to deal with companies who had nobody who could spell EDITOR and no users who had ever been to a MANMAN class, so we started offering them Level II support for a higher annual charge. We were spending much more time with these users than we had expected, so we evolved the new plan over three years ago: if you couldn't pass our MPE and MANMAN "test", you didn't qualify for what we began to call Level I support at our original, very reasonable, annual fees.

But I continue to write about self-sufficiency. The most succinct definition for what I've been trying to say about getting the most out of your investment in MANMAN is: *self-sufficiency means the ability to modify the applications to make them fit your business*. This definition implies that you have to know what the product does before you can think about changing it.

Another thing about Compaq's implementation that was very different from all the other users in the Houston area at the time was the company's scale. I'm not sure what the record is for number of simultaneous, worldwide logons for a company using MANMAN, but Compaq probably holds it and it must be in the thousands (not on one computer; they had datacenters around the world, aside from a dozen or so HP3000's in Houston).

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Since scale seems to be a differentiator, I wondered if there is a minimum number of users that a company must have in order to take full advantage of MANMAN? By "full advantage" I mean MPS, MRP, CRP, etc., as well as industry-specific extensions and interfaces, and the answer is perhaps 100 active users. By "active" I mean fully trained and capable of requesting meaningful enhancements.

It seems obvious to me that if a company the size of Compaq, with thousands of simultaneous logons, was successful with MANMAN, it is a system that has far more functionality than is needed by a small company with only fifty employees all in one building! Let's face it, original old MANMAN is "data-entry intensive" if everything is typed in through keyboards. Data capture was one of the first extensions Compaq, and many other successful companies, did to enhance MANMAN. They also had a small army of people typing all day long. If your company has fewer than 100 logons, you probably don't get as much value from MANMAN as other, larger companies do. Maybe you should be looking at a lower-end solution with less functionality but easier data capture.

While MANMAN will surely continue to fade away in the next decade, like Douglas McArthur's "Old Soldier" it may never die. The future will probably be stranger than any fiction we can imagine. Compaq may become HP (it isn't final at the date of this writing) and HP may try to stop third-party companies from enhancing MPE after 2003 (two things I would never have predicted). One thing that is predictable: companies that are self-sufficient in IT and have users who understand their own manufacturing systems, or at least who outsource support and programming to a company that does, will be more successful than those who do not. ❖

Re-Implementation

(Continued from page 1)

to another system, or stay on MANMAN?" The second option means you must refine your answer to, "We are just not going to leave MANMAN", "We can't leave MANMAN", or, "We will postpone the issue and address it in a couple of years when things have settled down."

Choosing the option to stay with MANMAN means addressing the issue of the shrinking knowledgebase of the system and how it works. The movement of

personnel within the company through advancement, retirement, or departure leads to lost expertise in the system and how it was implemented to run your business. Also, since MANMAN was implemented, your company's business environment has evolved resulting in changes as to how the system is being used to meet these new issues. You must also consider the accuracy of the data that has been "challenged" through complacency and less than satisfactory discipline while using the system. All of this can be supported by your own experiences along these lines at your company.

If you are staying with MANMAN, one avenue of resolution is to "re-implement". This includes a review, audit, and correction of your database. It will allow you to review system policies and procedures to insure that they still support your business processes and how you have melded MANMAN into them. When was the last time that you analyzed these facets of your business? Usually the response we get is, "When it was first implemented," and more often than not, "It has not been done since."

Do you remember when you last systematically educated and trained your employees on the system and how to use it efficiently and effectively? This question is usually met with, "We'll do it later," or, "There's not enough money in the budget," or, "We don't have time." While you can usually estimate how much an education and training program would cost to complete, can you objectively determine what it costs NOT to do it? If your company is struggling with the system, how much time and money is being wasted in excess labor efforts, inaccurate allocations of product and materials, and missed opportunities in the marketplace with the system in the shape that it's in?

You know your system and the pain that it has caused you over the years. Re-implementation is not free from pain either. As with everything, it incurs a cost in time and productivity. Your measurement tool is the payback that can be realized within the business after a re-implementation of the system. How much of your pain can be eliminated? Is it cheaper than a new system, and/or how much will it extend the life of your current system?

All of these questions should be part of an on-going process to constantly measure your system. Every few years a full re-implementation should be performed that retrains personnel and verifies that your

system and its policies and procedures are current with how you do business. And, if the cost of such a project gives you pause, ask, "What does it cost NOT to do it?" ❖

Most of our MANMAN customers are down in tier-one or tier-two, maybe even tier-three of the supply chain. Down here in the mid-market, we wait for the "big boys" to spend on new technology so the price will come down to a level we can afford. But, just as importantly, we wait for the results of their experiments with new technological innovations. There are many more spectacularly expensive failures than successes that become standards. Go back and review what was succeeding three to five years ago at GM and GE.

Optimization

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Managing an Enterprise is like Playing Chess on a 3-Dimensional Board...Blindfolded

All companies have simple and complex opportunities for profit improvement: usually the latter offers the greatest rewards. The problem is that the best ways to improve profits are obscured by their own complexities. This leaves most companies with a very large but a mostly invisible profit gap between current and achievable earnings. We don't pursue what we can't see. Instead, we go for our simple opportunities—they are easy to see with easily measured results and they make us feel good about our accomplishments, even when they unknowingly detract from profit.

Our greatest opportunities for profit improvement are hidden by complexities. To coordinate procurement, production, and sales activities for optimal results is a complex task—it requires us to do the right things in the right amount at the right times. Every day, thousands of companies fall short of their best possible business results. It's not because they're doing a poor job but because the opportunities for the most dramatic improvement are hidden in the complexities of the business.

These complex opportunities involve tradeoffs and ripple effects of many interacting variables that can-

not be properly balanced without the use of optimization technology. Remember Rubik's Cube? It has 43,252,003,274,489,856,000 possible patterns with only two variables, color and position, and only one is best possible.

LP (linear programming)-based optimization is ideally suited for helping business owners, executives, and managers plan, coordinate, schedule, and control their operation for the best possible near- and long-term profits. Without optimization technology, your best possible will not be much better than that of your equally ill-equipped competitors. With optimization tools and skills, you become liberated to achieve unmatched results.

Profit Software is the essential technology for Enterprise Optimization. It enables refined planning, coordination, and control of all business functions. It puts departmental decisions into company-wide context so that all concerned can work together for best possible bottom-line results.

For more information on Profit and Enterprise Optimization and how it can help you achieve your company's best possible bottom line, call Chuck Combs, John Simonich, Shaggy Carey, or Donnie Poston at the Support Group, inc., 1-800-798-9862. ❖

There are already some promising signs from the new owners of MANMAN. We expected some significant changes under the new management because SSA is *focused* on Manufacturing Applications solutions, whereas it was a sideline for CA. The first thing we are noticing is the move to unbundle annual maintenance support from annual enhancement subscription. We've been lobbying for that one since 1983!

Now that you can buy just support, without new releases, we finally have a level playing field. As a result of their new policy, our support may even cost a little more than the new vendor's support—which is as we think it should be. Our support is so much better, and we have the references to prove it. It *should* cost a little bit more! Congratulations, MANMAN users. You now have a much more reasonable company to deal with in SSA Global Technologies. But we think we will still be able to provide better support for MANMAN than they will.



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