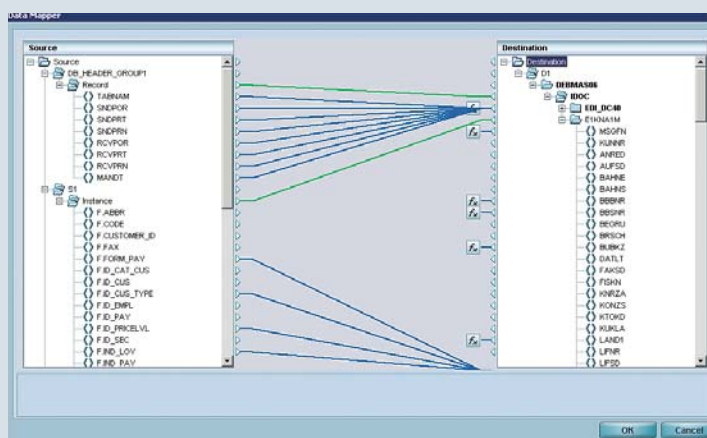




# Quality Production Information – Key to Successful Distribution Chain

I often see that companies owning costly information systems (ERP, MES) enter practically all data manually. They hesitate to introduce for example a quality WMS for operative warehouse management because acquirement of data required for its full utilisation would be too expensive. They take pains to secure continuous updating of key data and integration between systems. The main bottleneck preventing use of advanced systems managing production or logistic processes consists of costs for data acquirement and distribution. Those are activities that should – compared to data presentation – ideally run without human intervention. Today suitable and affordable solutions are available on the market.

This article deals with the situation in production companies. There are two reasons for that – firstly that manufacturers naturally focus on production problems and the issue of acquirement of operational data that can help optimise process quality and efficiency is only number two. The second reason is that production is a natural source of information for the supply chain and customer requirements (such as flexibility, information) have been growing constantly. Introduction of effective data collection methods in production is therefore an issue of primary topicality.



those that allow data acquirement automation in gradual financial steps while maintaining maximum extent of existing resources. Their introduction assures complete, objective and up-to-date information about machines, processes, people, and products including their distribution packaging.

What more, those systems are able to inform management about the current production status anytime and anywhere in the graphic or another suitable format, which dramatically promotes efficiency of operative management.

The process of implementation of a monitoring system in a concrete operation is locally dependant for example on production equipment, production process organisation, allocation of workplaces, etc. It is therefore difficult to unify it for example in conditions of a concern-based company.

## Data Collection Methods

With a view to minimisation of investment in machine equipment and the operational situation you can choose from the following options:

- Full automation, using a data interface
- Automation (for example by means of sensors)
- Using automatic identification technology tools (terminal with a touch screen, bar code, card reader).

The three options optimise acquirement of up-to-date and objective operative data.

## How to use the data

Every production manager or foreman has his/her own idea of how to use the continuously growing pile of production data. That's why flexible configuration of display methods and data transferability is important.

Let me mention the basic options:

- managerial current production status outputs
- information about meeting of targets
- visibility both at the workplace and abroad
- trends based on historical data
- full identification of all idle times
- objectification of targets
- detail examination of error sources
- determination of responsibility for errors
- quality control
- objective evaluation of people
- possibility of track back.

## Communication

A big mistake – which is unfortunately still common – is manual re-entering of acquired data to another system. Many companies have several specialised systems that don't communicate with each other. That is why communication tools that dramatically optimise existing company practice without big investments are designed. They allow easy configuration of "intelligent" multilateral communication, integration and maintenance of key data (Master Data Management) on various levels. Those systems that can be quite easily continuously adapted to the changing communication needs allow smooth resolution of the above mentioned pains.

## Conclusion

A production company is a potential source of a big quantity of primary information. Information that has been efficiently acquired and intelligently used in your own production or transferred to companies related within a production or distribution chain can help you gain advantage against competition that does not have it available.

The aim of the above mentioned solutions provided by flexible IT companies is to offer adaptable data collection and distribution tools enabling conceptual decision making, operative management, optimisation of processes and objective motivation of employees for reasonable investments.

A necessary condition on top of quality data in the system is management that knows how to use the data. ■

## Monitoring

A number of tools dealing with the above mentioned data acquirement issue exists on the market. However, efficiency is guaranteed only by

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