
Saving Time and Money: The Cat's In the Bag

David Cooper; Owens Corning

When you have achieved well-earned success and built a name on the foundation of excellence, you want to continue always in that important direction.

Owens Corning, a world leader in building materials and glass fiber composite systems, operates over 125 manufacturing facilities in twenty-two countries—with sales of five billion dollars annually. Building material system products include insulation, roofing, housewrap, vinyl siding, windows, and patio doors. In addition to the manufacture of engineered pipe systems, Owens Corning provides glass fiber reinforcements and yarns for the manufacture of a wide variety of composite materials.

For the past four years, understanding and improvement of business processes has been a fundamental component of the development and delivery of information systems at Owens Corning.

Information Systems within Owens

Corning is organized from three different perspectives. Global Development Teams responsible for producing and delivering information systems products support the company's processes, such as customer operations, materials management and logistics. Most Owens Corning information systems are utilized by all businesses globally.

Regional Information Systems executives act as liaisons to individual business units, identifying the unique needs of each, and participating in establishing priorities for process-driven enhancements. They focus on improving the way Information Systems performs their work, delivering methodologies standards, tools and training to their professionals.

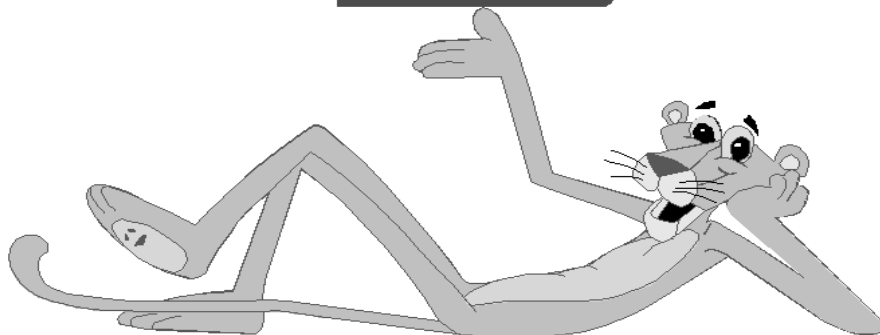
The Owens Corning Information Systems engineers had just implemented a brand new multi-million dollar management system. Their job was to make sure this huge system was implemented correctly. Now that this project is in the final stages, they are taking the initiative to go a step further and optimize the use of a new management system. They are integrat-

At a Glance

Problem: While Owens Corning continues to focus on understanding and improving the business process, the technologies used to perform this work had been limited to fairly standard desktop diagramming, word processing and presentation tools. The challenge lay in upgrading operations, making sure the manual and automated systems worked together in harmony. The IS engineers began thinking "outside the box" and decided to use simulation modeling to achieve this goal.

Solution: An evaluation of available tools identified ProcessModel simulation modeling as providing both an improved diagramming technology and the opportunity to apply simulation techniques to process design work. Information Systems engineers saw this as a tool to help work out the glitches in the system before actual implementation.

Results: The model increased the likelihood that Information Systems investments would deliver the anticipated value. It also helped avoid technology expenditures by identifying opportunities that can be better addressed through process changes.





ing both manual and automated systems so everything works together in an optimal manner. In addition, the I.S. engineers proactively took it upon themselves to teach the people who use these systems so that everything would run smoothly. Their goal was to save the company millions of dollars in unnecessary expenditures.

The I.S. Product Life Cycle integrates the analysis and evaluation of the business process with the identification of available technology solutions. Focusing on leveraging packaged software, process design is conducted within the context of potential package solutions. Variances from available product capabilities are introduced after evaluation of alternative process approaches.

The Problem

While there has been significant progress in understanding and improving the business process at Owens Corning, the current process design technologies have been limited to fairly standard desktop diagramming, word processing and presentation tools. The challenge lay in making sure both the manual and automated systems worked together in harmony. The I.S. engineers began thinking “outside the box” and decided to use simulation modeling to achieve this goal.

The Solution

During the first half of 1999, the organization introduced ProcessModel® to improve the quality, design and value, as well as the analysis and delivery of business processes. An evaluation of available tools identified ProcessModel simulation modeling as providing both an improved diagramming technology and the opportunity to apply simulation techniques to process design work.

Owens Corning has recently launched an effort to utilize ProcessModel software as a standard component of the Information Systems product delivery process.

The Results

The application of this technology was identified as providing value by helping to improve productivity within both Information Systems and the business pertaining to the analysis and design of processes. The models:

- Increased likelihood that Information Systems investments deliver the anticipated value
- Helped avoid technology expenditures by identifying opportunities that can be better addressed through process changes

ProcessModel was introduced by applying

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it to a few pilot projects. Once the value had been demonstrated to Information Systems management, representatives from each development team were selected as the initial group for deployment.

One person was positioned internally to provide consultation on both the application and technical support of the tool, with a plan to develop this expertise on both continents.

Storage locations were established on Owens Corning’s internal network to provide access to models, best practices (including ProcessModel published tips & techniques), and other communications about the product.

Future Applications

“Our long-term plan is to construct a library of models that represent all of the significant business and system processes within Owens Corning. We will not, however, have a modeling project. Rather we will

integrate the development of models into all significant information systems projects.

To accomplish that, we need to develop a resource pool of people capable of producing models and continue to demonstrate the value of modeling on projects. The availability of these models will better position us to:

- Describe the capabilities of the process and system to business units or locations being evaluated for deployment
- Improve the understanding of the larger business process by operators of the various process components
- Share best practices between facilities, thus leveraging our investment in global processes and technologies
- Position us to more efficiently evaluate proposed process & system modification and identify productivity and service improvement opportunities.

We anticipate that we will have help in building our library of models. As various parts of the organization are exposed to the capabilities and value of process modeling and simulation, we anticipate that process organizations will begin to adopt ProcessModel as a tool to evaluate and manage their portfolio of processes.

FIND OUT MORE

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