Social Manufacturing

JEFF REINKE, Editorial Director, Chem.Info

By JEFF REINKE, Editorial Director, *Chem.Info*

It’s too complicated.

It’s expensive.

It takes too long for people to understand.

It’s costly to maintain.

The current DOS-based spreadsheet system on my green-type-with-black-background monitor works just fine.

When it comes to investing in and implementing enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, all of the above are commonly heard when manufacturers explain why they’re hesitant to expand or upgrade their use of such platforms. Then, if you ask those who are using enterprise resource planning assets across their operation, one is bound to encounter some frustrating comments centered on how many of the tool’s capabilities are simply not utilized to their full potential.

In the end, too many design, production, logistics, management and distribution functions are done in ways that probably don’t fully capitalize on the ERP system’s time- and money-saving capabilities. This stems primarily from either a lack of knowledge about what the system can do, or a lack of understanding on how to extract the proper data. Both are understandable obstacles given the complexity of the software and the demanding work environment manufacturing represents.

Fortunately, one thing manufacturers and software designers have in common is the ability to understand and capitalize on mainstream consumer trends. With this in mind, a number of manufacturing software providers are taking cues from the

explosion of personalized web feeds, social media sites and various other online resources that act as a filter in delivering only what an individual is interested in reading, watching or sharing at a given moment.

As a result, many of these developers have brought operations, maintenance and supply chain management personnel into the era of social manufacturing.

“Basically, social manufacturing is configuring ERP-based information to the user,” states Jack Payne, vice president of enterprise software for CDC. “With CDC’s offerings, one can establish a user-selectable view. So when logging in, the user sees a customized dashboard from within the ERP system of whatever they want, or is most relatable to their job and responsibilities,” he states.

In addition to streamlining the process of extracting such information, Payne also points out that this type of functionality can eliminate days of ERP training and simplify how the platform is managed overall. “Our software can even be set up for a mobile device, as a feed for on-floor message boards, and for producing proactive e-mail alerts and notifications. This is all based on monitoring trends based on the user’s preferences, as well as activity and inactivity within their area or areas of responsibility,” states Payne.

Along with greater end-user functionality, the ability to more easily share internal information with colleagues or outside vendors is simplified. So is access to engrained wiki-pages or multimedia data sources, such as videos, that help to better demonstrate what the information is showing.

Much like viewing a Facebook wall, Twitter deck or YouTube channel, the infusion of a social manufacturing provision means ERP data and functionality is tailored to what the individual user needs and wants. Ideally, this translates into an easier demonstration of the platform’s return on investment due to the increased amount of information being extracted. And internal communications should improve when addressing issues like product quality, recalls and supply chain management.

What’s your take? Sound off via jeff.reinke@advantagemedia.com *[1].*

Source URL (retrieved on *12/12/2013 - 7:05pm*):
http://www.chem.info/blogs/2012/01/social-manufacturing

Links:
[1] mailto:jeff.reinke@advantagemedia.com