
Imation Uses Innovation; Helps Clients Achieve Success

Ran Bedekar; Imation



ing that they help their clients improve their print and audio/visual media. Imation assists the packaging and marketing/communications arms of Fortune 500 companies. Imation supplies digital asset management systems (software and hardware) that can enhance videos, printed materials (such as sales displays, brochures), and even billboards.

Have you ever seen a sharp, glossy ad in a magazine that caught your eye? Imation helps

provide the technology that results in those types of pictures, to help their clients communicate a strong message in an attractive way.

Problem

In the corporate world, time is money, and Imation encountered three distinct problems that every company that provides services to another company experiences:

1) They needed to refine and differentiate their technologies to provide the most innovative service that steps beyond what other

At a Glance

Problem:

Imation decided to focus on helping their clients (primarily large corporations) enhance their visual media and reduce the time it took to develop the visual aspects of packaging, brochures, billboards, sales displays, etc. Reducing cycle time and enhancing visual technology processes became their central goal.

Solution: To accomplish this objective, the Imation team decided they needed computer mapping/flowcharting tools and modeling to determine critical workflow bottlenecks and improve cycle time. Such a massive undertaking required high-end technology. The team decided to use ProcessModel® simulation modeling to help them evaluate and fine-tune the data and results.

Results: Results from simulation modeling showed two activities as bottleneck areas. Running the model with new times showed the job cycle dropping by 22 days (from 155 to 133 days). However, activity utilization stayed above 95% (a good sign!). Process engineering using new technology, which would cut at least ten days from the two activities, was recommended to the customer.

Imation Corporation, headquartered in Oakdale, Minnesota, is in the business of helping their corporate clients reach their goals—both in productivity and quality of work. The positive end result is a reflection of the synergism between Imation and its customers.

Imation provides consulting and system integration services for customers. This is a fancy way of say-

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companies were offering. 2) It was imperative to be able to explain to their customers, in a credible way, why they selected certain solutions for the customers' problems. 3) Imation wanted to show their customers why they needed to take advantage of their advanced technological equipment and tools. They wished to help them catch the vision of the “big picture” instead of being satisfied with “just getting by” with outmoded methodologies.

Solution

In days past, consulting executives would sit around a table and brainstorm about ways to help their customers, based on their experience and knowledge. In some cases, they shot close to the mark, in others, they were way off base. Imation decided that the days of guessing games were over. They wanted to move away from the traditional method that consulting companies used to evaluate solutions for their customers and step into the next dimension of decision making.

Therefore, they decided to test their ideas on simulation modeling—a type of animated, interactive flow chart—before proceeding further. They turned to simulation modeling because it would help them perfect their technology and make sure all processes were in sync before they presented the solutions to their clients.

Simulation modeling provided a tool for accurate and definite analysis. The facts would present themselves in a logical and understandable fashion. Because of its excellent reputation, Imation decisionmakers decided to use ProcessModel® simulation modeling to help them evaluate and fine-tune the data and results.

In one case study, the team conducted an analysis of the way printed communications materials (sales brochures, magazine articles, etc.) were contributing to the workflow of a Fortune 500 company. This particular company maintained about 38 projects per year with a single creative agency and printer. The average cycle time was approximately 5 months per project, and the objective was to cut the cycle time without adding resources.

Using ProcessModel as a case study model, they developed a 10,000 foot animated flowchart of print collateral workflow. The objective of the modeling was to:

- Determine current job cycle times
- Determine major bottlenecks within the process
- Brainstorm with customer team on how to eliminate bottlenecks

After identification and evaluation of these key areas, they then fed

the process improvements data into the model to determine improvements.

Results

Primary results from simulation modeling showed two activities as bottleneck areas. Running the model with new times showed the job cycle dropping by 22 days (from 155 to 133 days). However, activity utilization stayed above 95% (a good sign!). Process engineering using new technology, which would cut at least ten days from the two activities, was recommended to the customer.

Secondary results from simulation modeling revealed that 1) Imation could pinpoint solution areas tailored to each customer's distinctive needs 2) They could show the model to their clients and give them the rationale for their decisions and 3) they could show the customer/clients the reasons why Imation's advanced technology systems could benefit the client and assist them to purchase more advanced equipment and tools.

Helping others help themselves is what Imation is all about. They do it, and do it well...with help from state-of-art technology like simulation modeling.

FIND OUT MORE

About the author: Ran has more than 30 years experience in computer software, systems and simulation, in both management and technical functions. He has a MS in Operations and a MBA.

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