

Anthro Technology Furniture



HighJump Software Helps Increase Manufacturing Efficiency by 15 Percent at Furniture Manufacturer

Company Profile—Anthro Technology Furniture

Headquartered in Portland, Ore., Anthro Technology Furniture has been manufacturing flexible and modular furniture for computers and computer-based equipment since 1984. From a large corporate user base to the U.S. Government to a thriving OEM channel, Anthro's diverse set of customers keeps its 150-employee distribution facility humming—and its IT department constantly pursuing ways to reduce time and remove costs from the manufacturing process.

Rising Costs Required Action

Shortly after completing an SAP® upgrade in the summer of 2000, Anthro encountered several issues that were negatively impacting the manufacturing process and the company's bottom line. In addition to significantly higher user licensing costs for SAP, Anthro was faced with the fact that training costs for shop floor employees were simply too high. "Infusing a new employee into our environment and training them to use SAP was becoming an unrealistic and

cost-prohibitive option," stated David Jones, Chief Information Officer. "Combine that with some obvious gaps in SAP's data collection functionality, and something had to be done."

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A Solution is Discovered—and Quickly Implemented

Not wanting to limit themselves in their search for data collection functionality, the company began by informally interviewing more than a dozen vendors to gather ideas

on possible features and functions. Once the specifications for their new system were finalized, they narrowed the field to three data collection vendors, and eventually to one—HighJump Software. The largest contributing factor to Anthro's decision, according to Jones, was the HighJump™ development tool set. "We were intrigued by the fact that our IT staff could effectively migrate the system and continue development after implementation," Jones said. "Whether it's adding a transaction or an entire business process, we can do whatever is required to maintain the application in-house. That's the true definition of low total cost of ownership." And to Jones' delight, the new data collection system was rolled out with the first and most critical set of transactions in place just six weeks after contracts were signed.





Significant Improvements on the Shop Floor

Within weeks of initial rollout, Anthro began to leverage the true manufacturing-based functionality of the HighJump system. In addition to creating a single, more all-inclusive desktop for the shop floor staff, Anthro was able to electronically link all of its support materials directly to the shop floor. "When I give plant tours, the ability to present documentation and work orders right on the shop floor is what impresses everyone," states Jones. "Giving shop floor employees immediate access to drawings, quality control documents, process preparation guides and even work orders by scanning a bar code on a shop ticket blows people away."

According to Jones, having HighJump Data Collection Advantage on the shop floor is also the primary reason that new hires and seasonal employees are able to come in and immediately participate—productively—in the manufacturing process. Prior to implementation of HighJump Data Collection Advantage, the manufacturing Team Leaders were directly providing up to 20 hours of SAP training to each new employee. But now, things are different.

"HighJump Data Collection Advantage was instrumental in its ability to short-cycle our training requirements," said Jones. "Instead of three full days of SAP training per person, employees now spend just 20 minutes learning the data collection system." This enhances Anthro's ability to add and re-deploy labor in response to surging and seasonal demand.



In terms of measurable productivity improvements, Jones estimates that shop floor employees have become 10 to 15 percent more efficient after moving to HighJump Data Collection Advantage—with no substantial changes in process.

The vast majority of these cost savings were a direct result of streamlined data entry into SAP, which led to an overall increase in the productivity of Anthro's workforce.

Continued Improvement

Looking ahead, Anthro plans on adding transactions for time and attendance and cycle counting. The company is also contemplating a move toward creating machine interfaces with the data collection system—whereby each machine used in the manufacturing process is automatically loaded with the appropriate program based on a scan of the job ticket. But whatever direction the company chooses, Jones is confident that the bar code system his group chose will serve Anthro's needs well into the future.

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