Case study

CARe Autoschade decreases lead times and employee stress with Quintiq

CARe AUTOSCHADE

QUINTIQ

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– Jan De Bock,
Front Office Consultant, CARe

In 2001, the Dutch auto body shop chain CARe Autoschade implemented CAReView, an automated planning system based on the Quintiq Supply Chain Planning and Optimization Suite. The decision to use the CAReView system was left to each CARe subsidiary. Several sites introduced the system while others continued to plan manually or with Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. A number of developments, including an improving market and a management buyout, motivated CARe to re-examine its processes and standardize them. As a result, CARe decided to use CAReView as the basis for a new centralized planning system. CAReView was upgraded and then installed in all CARe locations. "In 2007 CARe started CARe United, a company-wide program to standardize and optimize all our business processes," explained Jan de Bock, front office consultant at CARe. "The aim was to increase the productivity of the organization as a whole, partly by improving cooperation within the chain. It was obvious we had to get things right as far as planning was concerned."

The new CAReView system was designed through close cooperation between CARe employees Jan de Bock, Claus Ahlborn (an external IT consultant), and Patrick van Gogh (application developer at Capgemini, the implementation partner). In 2001, Ahlborn, together with Capgemini, laid the foundation for the business rules and business logic of the first CAReView version.

"Since I had been closely involved in the 2001 version, CARe hired me in 2007 as an external consultant and asked me to help them upgrade CAReView to meet their present needs," expounded Ahlborn. "CARe had already optimized many business processes and achieved a new standard in the CARe United project. Nevertheless, the CAReView business logic had to be modified to be used in a central planning solution.

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– Peter Wijgerde, Location Manager, CARe

Performance was a problem with the original CAReView system. Previously, each location had its own application, which ran on a central server in the head office in Vianen. Now, there is one application that perfectly serves all 54 locations. Employees access various parts of the system depending on their position. In addition, user-friendly screens were designed to serve the planning needs of multiple users. CARe also upgraded from Quintiq 2.5 to Quintiq 4.1. In the spring of 2008, the design and implementation of the upgraded system were completed.

From the beginning, Peter Wijgerde, Location Manager at CARe Tilburg, was enthusiastic about implementing a company-wide planning solution. He had always been convinced of the usefulness of an advanced planning system. As a result, the Tilburg location became the best practice location as far as planning was concerned. "Static planning is impossible in our line of work. Planning is always dynamic. For example, a certain repair takes more time than anticipated or a customer shows up unexpectedly and must be helped immediately," exemplified Wijgerde. "Normally, when a customer comes in, we conduct an intake. An employee assesses the damages using a tablet PC. Our back office system, CAReFlow, feeds CAReView with cost and calculation data and start and finishing times for repairs. In addition, CAReFlow checks inventory and orders parts. CAReView comes up with possible dates for conducting and finishing the repairs. It bases its proposal on numerous variables, including employee availability, knowledge and experience. A trainee obviously needs more time for a job than an experienced worker. The system can take all this into consideration and be updated accordingly."

CAReView now performs all the operational planning for all CARe locations. At any given moment, it is possible to print out the daily plans. Shop managers have a tablet PC to keep track of repairs in real time. As soon as a car is finished, the shop manager enters this into the system. The receptionist then informs the customer that the car is ready. "The success of the system depends on how you use it," Jan de Bock reported. "For example, when an employee starts spray painting, he needs to enter this into the system. As soon as the job is finished, this also needs to be entered. When this is done accurately, we can keep track of the costs for every step in the process, as well as optimize the planning."

"That is why we pay so much attention to training," continued Wijgerde. "Together with Claus Ahlborn, a training program was developed. Over 150 employees attended a workshop and were supplied with ample information on the importance of planning and how to use the system. Every employee received an extensive manual with many practical tips. This has saved us considerable time and ensured the success of the implementation."

The results

Jan de Bock and Peter Wijgerde say improved productivity and reduced stress levels on the shop floor are two of the main benefits of the new CAReView system. "Less stress begins in the parking lot. Not all our locations have sufficient parking. With the right planning, we can make sure customers have parking spaces when they arrive," explained Wijgerde. "As far as productivity is concerned, we are better able to manage our capacity. In Tilburg, our planning is based on a utilization rate of 85 to 90 percent. This leaves room for a quick job between the planned ones, minus the stress unexpected repairs can cause. In addition, with CAReView our information delivery has improved dramatically. As a location manager, I have full insight into our operations and can also check the utilization rates of other locations. This means we can help each other when business is busy." Jan de Bock pointed out that it's the customer who profits from the new CAReView system. "A promise is a promise and the right planning leads to a better quality of service and shorter lead times. In 98 percent of the cases, the customer picks up his car at the agreed time. That's excellent service."

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