

A Day in the Life of a Company President



Using VPE Mike can get real-time status of all customer activities from his desk.

Mike, the President of a mid-sized manufacturer of office seating, had been trying to put the last two years into perspective. Although last year, according to economists, had been “the recession that wasn’t”, Mike couldn’t tell. He was forced to layoff over 10% of his workforce, all good people, and make changes to his business that impacted customers. In spite of all this his business had fared better than most. The economic news now, while not positive, was at least upbeat. Mike could see the light at the end of the tunnel and it wasn’t another train. The timing was right to do something but what?

The next morning in the shower it all came together for Mike. It was time to take his company to the next level and to push himself personally. No more layoffs! His employees deserved better, and besides, the whole situation demoralized those still working — a no win situation. **Mike was tired of competing, he wanted to *dominate* the market he was in, maybe even create a new one.** Fact is, like it or not, Mike was selling a commodity product and more and more getting a sale meant cutting the price. His products were good, good as anybody else’s, but given the competition there was little reason other than price for a customer to go one way or another. His lead-time and service were about the same as the others too. Many of his competitors were bigger and could profitably discount deeper than Mike. The ERP system and the Lean initiative Mike implemented merely helped him keep pace.

Mike took some time and looked for someone with fresh ideas and mid-market experience. Someone he could partner with to come up with a winning game plan.

Mike found 2think. While a new company, 2think had over 40 years of experience solving problems in companies like Mike’s. Working with Mike, 2think constructed an end-to-end vision from the customer’s perspective of what would be achieved, breaking it down into a sequence of steps that made the process predictable and affordable. 2think claimed they sold **solutions, not software** — Mike now understands what they meant. Through 2think Mike and his company had access to everything required to *finish* the job, not just complete the sale. This wasn’t a one time deal but a long term partnership with the goal of creating outstanding performance. The size of Mike’s company was soon to become a **competitive weapon** that would combine the ability to change quickly with world-class operational performance.

The first step was to implement a Supply Chain Planning & Execution tool called Virtual Production Engine™ (VPE) from Viewlocity. VPE provided the major operational performance benefits needed for a manufacturing company with a complex environment to gain control and build a sustainable competitive advantage. The best part of the implementation was that the ROI was well under a year and generated savings that could be used to finance future needs. It is rare to have one tool that creates significant **top and bottom line improvement** but this one did.

With 2think's help, Mike realized that by delivering product faster, maintaining bulletproof reliability, and being extremely flexible with customer change orders, he could get more than his share of the pie. His new "product" was the *process* of specifying, ordering, building and delivering seating solutions at unmatched performance levels.

The next step will be to streamline the time it takes to get an order from sales into the plant. Then 2think and a partner will help automate the shipping process so that once an order is complete it is delivered as promised. Finally, Mike will roll out an Advanced Visual Configurator that will make the specification process fast and error free. With 2think's integration help, the end result will be a single, closed-loop process that is super fast, flexible and reliable.

The irony is that with all the focus on the top line, the bottom line has never looked better. There is much less pressure on price now that the process is helping to drive sales. Mike now has all he needs to create a successful presence on the web with little additional cost. What a great way to get extra mileage out of older, high margin product lines!

Needless to say Mike now sings in the shower.

*"If you chase perfection you will never catch it. However, on the way you will find excellence."
- Vince Lombardi -*

