

# Single dashboards: the key to cost efficiency

**Keeping costs under control is a priority for all pharmaceutical companies. Fortunately, there is a new solution that can help firms take a broader view of cost bottlenecks and manage their operations more effectively.**

**B**ringing pharmaceutical products to market involves managing a complex array of processes to ensure a drug is economically viable to produce and satisfies the stringent regulatory requirements in the industry. Controlling costs has been a dominant trend in recent years, but the focus of efficiency drives has often centred on one or two key processes and failed to yield the maximum benefit.

‘The biggest influences on production processes for pharmaceutical companies are regulatory compliance and cost reduction,’ says Jelle van der Steen, commercial director of Stevo. ‘We believe strongly in enabling customers to get their costs down in their own plant. At present, pharmaceutical companies lack a reporting system that allows them to identify the bottlenecks in their production processes.’

Stevo is a software development company that specialises in delivering solutions to the manufacturing industries. Its flagship product, MES Compass®, is becoming increasingly popular among pharmaceutical companies as well as in the automotive and

high-tech industries, and is already established in the field of food and beverages.

## Managing bottlenecks

MES Compass is designed to address the problems caused by a narrow approach to cost cutting in such industries and to combine all aspects of manufacturing into a single solution, providing decision-makers with a global view of all constituent processes.

The system integrates all production processes, including business intelligence, quality management and packaging, on a batch or product basis. Thus, it provides fewer interfaces and a less fragmented IT landscape for viewing the production profile of any given product. Furthermore, MES Compass contains no intrinsic business model and can be configured to meet the specific needs of an industry or an individual company. Essentially, the system bridges the gap between enterprise systems and process control systems.

‘We have made no assumptions on behalf of our customers,’ says van der Steen. ‘MES Compass is also component-based, so a firm can start with

a low-level implementation – say, around a single product – and grow it over time. This means the system is easy to implement and the benefits are clear before a company invests in a larger implementation.’

The high level of integration allows bottlenecks to be recognised in real time, wherever they occur. Consequently, the managers can address such bottlenecks

with that. So MES Compass also focuses on making regulatory compliance easier.’

Systems like MES Compass are part of the trend in the wider business world for bringing business-critical information into a single dashboard that allows real-time management of key processes. Such systems provide a global view of operations, so decision-makers can drill down to any level to

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instantly and keep a plant or a production line working at optimum level. This has already resulted in significant savings for a number of firms.

‘The kind of savings we can achieve largely depends on the customer’s actual situation,’ says van der Steen, ‘though in more than one case we have saved 25 per cent of production costs. As well as cutting expenses, the regulatory environment in the pharmaceutical industry is stricter in terms of quality control, and we must comply

review the performance of individual process stages or compare production plants in different locations.

‘Firms can see why one plant performs better than another,’ explains van der Steen, ‘all through a single dashboard. Therefore, there is considerable interest in systems like MES Compass.’ As a result, the industry can re-evaluate its approach to cost management, and the early adopters could well reap the biggest benefits. **END**