Synoptix
by CompuSoft Development

Federal Foam Technologies is a complete custom fabricator of bonded fiber, flexible cellular foam and plastic materials with operations capable of providing engineering and research and development services. Reporting on various key performance indicators was a challenge for Federal Foam that required multiple spreadsheets and reports from their ERP database, but often didn't yield the information that they need the most. In order to get at the data they need to make timely business decisions, Federal Foam chose Synoptix as their reporting and dashboard solution.

Like most companies in the economic downturn, business critical information has become all the more important to Federal Foam. Knowing exactly where they are and what's in the pipeline is particularly vital. After implementing Synoptix, they can now get a snapshot of long term available capacity that empowers them to plan accordingly. "Since we have customers giving us forecast information, we can now project out what they're doing, which is important especially during the downturn this year. With this new Synoptix report, which utilizes a custom sphere created with forecast and routing relationships, we can now project a 'Rough Cut' capacity out as far as we feel our customer forecast is reliable. We can analyze the data in terms of what they're doing and how they tend to drop off or ramp up. It's been great to be able to finally see these important trends," notes Tammy Helling, Software Administrator at Federal Foam.

After switching to Synoptix, Tammy says she's been able to create Capacity Reports that empower the company to do more effective capacity planning. For instance, with the built-in Job Order Sphere in Synoptix, the company can now filter and group the work center data and get the remaining hours left per operation, and derive the capacity by week. "We can review the first four weeks using firm job order data and also review forecast data going out six months on the same report. We view the forecast for nine weeks, as well as monthly, to see future demand," says Tammy. "We have another customer coming on strong with new programs. We've known we were going to be over capacity, so the report is helping by giving us a good feel for what's out there and what we need to do to accommodate new business."

Federal Foam has another major customer for which they're doing daily due date totals by part. This customer sends 120-150 orders per day and can order 15 different parts with an average of 5 different parts per order. With a new Synoptix report, they have a more accurate forecast of what's coming down the pipe. "With this report it's really nice that we can go in and see the quantity, know when the demand spikes, and see what's coming down the line. It's made our processes much more seamless. If we want the details, we can simply drill down and see each order and the order date."

Tammy says that they've also benefited from a customer analysis report that tells the company where customers are compared to last month, and last year. "We had a customer that wanted to see where they are compared to last year by part number. I did the report in Synoptix in only fifteen minutes, and it can now be used for any customer. We can see where they were last year compared to this year now by simply running the report. I now have two

versions of this report; one by quantity and one by sales amount. It is a very fun tool to use. Once I had the one version of the report I just made a copy and changed the BI cells to a different calculation from QTY to sales extension."

"Bottom line is," Tammy concludes, "we weren't able to do these reports before which was decreasing our ability to make timely business decisions. Before we purchased Synoptix, we were using pivot tables and excel. Even with that, the reports weren't getting written in the format that we needed. For an ad hoc report, we were having to do what many other companies do – write a query and import the information into Excel. This is a cumbersome process that would have to then be repeated for each customer or part depending on what we were doing in the report, which takes too much time. Synoptix has empowered us to get these reports out with the information that's important to Federal Foam's business, which can then simply be run with user defined dates and full drill downs. It's been a huge time saver and has increased productivity in this area. It's been a great tool and I look forward to getting more reports into our production environment."

On the financial side, before adopting Synoptix Federal Foam was using FRx to run key reports. Cathy Longtin, Controller at Federal Foam, says they wanted to move to Synoptix for several reasons. "For one, FRx was really slow. Our records are quite large and FRx either wouldn't finish running the reports at all, or they took forty-five minutes to run. Grabbing historical data in particular bogged the system down. Also, we can do things in Synoptix that we couldn't even dream of doing in FRx."

Cathy notes that they were finally able to build financial statements in Synoptix that appropriately account for their three facilities. She was able to set up one Income Statement and, using Synoptix's filter capabilities, run it for whichever plant(s) she needs instead of having to build a separate report for each plant.

"We can write," says Cathy, "comparative reports with historical data that pull information for customers that have several thousand invoices per week. And now that they're in Synoptix, they run instantaneously, rather than taking upwards of forty-five minutes. Synoptix is saving me at least eight hours a month, and we can close a full day earlier than before. Reports are also much easier to build. If I need something new it's easy to set up and I can build them myself, rather than having to rely on IT for help. It's been a tremendous tool for us."