

SPARTECH CORPORATION: IMPLEMENTING A GLOBAL CAPA & CUSTOMER COMPLAINT HANDLING SYSTEM

An AssurX interview with Doug Carlson, Director of Quality, Spartech

Q: What were the reasons that led you to implement CATSWeb®?

A: Spartech had been using an outdated version of Lotus Notes to track CAPA and customer complaints. This required significant IT support which was getting increasingly hard to find due to the old version of the software and the client/server architecture. Also, the ability to easily trend across locations and share information was minimal at best.

Q: Why was CATSWeb the best solution? What other things did you consider?

A: CATSWeb was chosen by Spartech for two primary reasons. First, the zero client, Web-based design was very beneficial, considering that we were looking to implement this in over 40 locations with a variety of hardware installations. Second, the ease with which I was able to demo the product and build forms and workflows similar to our current processes, with minimal training, was impressive.

Q: What were the problems with other software products you considered?

A: I had a difficult time running demos of other products, specifically with regards to speed and ability to easily modify the forms to fit our organization. Also, the client/server architecture of some of the other products concerned us.

**Q: What are you using CATSWeb for?
And how many locations are on the system now?**

A: Spartech is utilizing CATSWeb for CAPA in over 30 facilities to date, as well as customer complaints in over 20 facilities. In addition, we have developed a Project Scorecard Form in CATSWeb that is being used to track progress and share best practices of our Pyramids of Performance (POP) Continuous Improvement Teams.

Q: Has CATSWeb been a good tool for these processes?

A: Yes. The benefits of CATSWeb have included easy implementation and a quick learning curve, as well as the visibility for all locations within the company. This has allowed for a new level of communication and trending that Spartech has not seen with our old processes.

In addition, using CATSWeb for CAPA and customer complaints has resulted in decreased IT costs, increased productivity for users, quicker responses to issues, and improved communication within and between the plant locations.

Q: What about AssurX support?

A: AssurX has been extremely responsive with any issues that have come up.

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Q: What are some future uses for CATSWeb?

A: Spartech plans to continue to roll out CATSWeb to all locations (over 40) for CAPA, customer complaints and Continuous Improvement Team Projects. In addition, we hope to begin using it for documenting internal audits, nonconforming material notices, and possibly new product development projects.

Q: How will automating these future processes impact your organization?

A: These applications will greatly improve communication and eliminate redundant work. CATSWeb is an excellent product that should help Spartech continuously improve for many years to come.

About Spartech Corporation

Spartech Corporation (NYSE:SEH) is a leading producer of engineered thermoplastic material, polymeric compounds, and molded & profile products for a wide spectrum of manufacturing customers. The Company's three business segments, which operate out of 44 North American and European facilities, annually process more than 1.2 billion pounds of custom sheet & rollstock, specialty plastic alloys, color & specialty compounds, and molded & profile products. For more information, please visit www.spartech.com.

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