

IT: Driving the Automotive Sector



automobiles.

Although the auto industry is into manufacturing and has mechanical engineering as its core function, it has always used IT in various forms. Ranging from automobile, component research and designing and mechanized assembling to the use of intelligent micro chips for engines, security and electronic systems, IT has been the key in providing innovative features in

In addition, the sector has embraced solutions like Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Supply Chain Management (SCM), Business Service Management (BSM), Human Resource Management(HRM), Customer Relation Management (CRM), Purchase Order Management (POM), Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) and various other business process suites.

"For the past 25 years, we have been using IT solutions, which are developed by our in-house team as per our business needs. Tools such as Pro/E, Catia and Ideas are commonly used for designing by automotive sector," informed Prabhakar Deosthali, head (IT) of Kinetic Motor Company, Pune.

"In addition, we will introduce a real-time based online system for our dealers that will help them to place purchase orders, checking of stock inventories and account status and order tracking. This system will play a key role in exchanging business details between the company and dealers, and also improve the business efficiency," explained Deosthali.

About IT's importance in the auto sector, Deosthali remarked, "IT is the driver of the automotive industry. CRM is a very critical solution that provides all valuable details and information - such as customer's feedback, which helps to forecast business strategies and product analysis."

While Kinetic Motors considers CRM as a key part of its business processes, another automotive

giant, Tata Motors has deployed BMC's BSM solution to align its IT function with business goals.

It's natural for a large enterprise, like Tata Motors, to consider IT as a strategic part of its business. While explaining the reason behind the growing importance of IT among enterprises, Pankaj Dhume, president and CEO of BMC Software (India), said, "Companies have become increasingly aware that any IT disruptions, however major or minor, have the potential to cause significant losses in sales and customer service, which can affect a company's bottom line."

According to Probir Mitra, CIO of Tata Motors, the goal of his IT organization is to be strategic to the business, also to proactively help drive business goals, rather than reactively responding to IT outages and service issues.

Mitra explained, "In our highly competitive industry, it's important to provide the highest service levels possible to our customers, and seek continual quality improvement. With Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and ISO 20000, we want to create a culture of continual improvement and best practices. BMC has in-depth knowledge about ITIL, and provides automated solutions mapped to ITIL processes that will help us to achieve ISO 20000 - certification."

Similarly, IT is an integral part of TVS Motors' business. According to the company's CIO, T. G. Dhandapani, IT is the backbone of TVS' business operations, supply chain, finance, human resource, purchase, sales, customer related data and product development.

IT has helped in streamlining TVS' operations, reducing inventories, better understanding of customer behavior and enhancing the product development process. The company has successfully integrated its operations across 7 plants globally using network infrastructure.

"Our dealer base across the country (about 500+) is connected to us via IT systems, which enables a real time exchange of sales and products data. It is how IT has helped to overcome some problems, and added considerable business value to our company," explained Dhandapani.

In terms of IT solutions, TVS Motors has deployed SAP's ERP including SCM, PLM. "We have also developed in-house solutions for dealers like Dealer Management System (DMS). We use SAP' Business Intelligence (BI) for generating business and analytical reports," he added.

According to him, IT is an integral part for automotive sector and its business. Dhandapani considered SCM, DMS/CRM and PLM as the 3 top areas of automotive industry, which are significantly dependent on IT and benefit from it.

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