



VITAL PLANT: AVERTS 75,000-VEHICLE RECALL

MANUFACTURING EXECUTION SYSTEM CASE STUDY

Executive Summary

Following the final manufacturing, inventory and shipping of thousands of machine-stitched airbags, a Tier 1 supplier was made aware of a problem at the supplier level. New information was learned that identified a problem with the stitching on some of the airbag reinforcements that was causing them to fail.

VIA Information Tools, Inc. is a manufacturing execution domain expert focused on business improvement through traceability, process enforcement, real time visibility, and analysis utilizing manufacturing software applications and professional services.



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THE CHALLENGE

Immediately, the Tier 1 supplier needed to determine whether the defective airbags were still in inventory or if they had already been used in production by their end customer, a large automaker. Not only did the Tier 1 need to determine where these products were, they face the potential of a driving a large-scale recall. Making the investigation even more difficult, the supplier was only able to provide a lot number for the suspect parts. This meant the Tier 1 would need to look at production for a three-week period, which included over 75,000 units.

THE SOLUTION

VIA's VITAL PLANT manufacturing execution system enabled the Tier 1 supplier to serialize tracking of the airbag module, which gave them a report that included the serial number of the finished good part, the container it was in, and the customer and plant to which it was shipped.

THE RESULTS

VITAL PLANT identified the parts that needed to be recalled, which amounted to a total of only six. The Tier 1 supplier called the automaker and gave them the corresponding serial numbers. This allowed the automaker to identify the affected vehicles and to repair the vehicles at the owners' homes. So instead of recalling 75,000 vehicles, only six vehicle owners were affected, saving the Tier 1 supplier over \$100M.

