



Merit & VIA

**Utilizing Creative Implementation Models that
are Empowering Customers**

Advances with Customer Empowerment

The Reality

Start-up for a new, larger manufacturing organization is daunting. There are many decisions that need to be made in order to ensure the best path for long term success. Optimizing systems and resources becomes critical. What are our end goals? What systems give us the best chance to reach these goals? When beginning their manufacturing in Matamoros, Merit had many of these decisions to make. Choosing a Manufacturing Execution System (MES) was at the top of their list. With the current options available, what model allowed Merit to work toward a growth metric that fit their needs?

The Challenge

The electronics industry has many players. When focusing on the automotive market, there are OEM requirements that must be met in order to maintain and grow a business. Merit recognized they needed to begin with a strong presence out of the gate in order to have control over their production process. Tracking parts, understanding their genealogy, focusing on data points that provide the information needed to produce high quality parts, while maintaining strong production numbers were among the many decisions Merit was challenged to make. All of these attributes must be in place, but at the same time, have no adverse effects on producing the volume necessary to compete in the automotive electronics market. Another challenge was empowering Merit's staff to find and take ownership of an MES that allows them to keep pace with growth, be managed internally and keep costs at a manageable, controllable level. Studies show that the top two obstacles to adapting to new systems are gaps in workforce skills and lack of employee knowledge. How could Merit break the mold and avoid these obstacles themselves?

The Solution

Merit approached VIA looking for an MES solution that would provide them with answers to the challenges they faced. Knowing about VIA's MAN-IT system from other automotive suppliers, the decision was made to review and determine the full capabilities of the software.

VIA's implementation model is based on empowering the Customer to not only understand how to support their MES internally, but also how to grow and implement without external assistance. VIA's pay-as-you-grow methodology does not focus on the production facility as a whole, but only on the operations that a Customer wants to begin with. Implementation was done with the mindset and priority of transferring knowledge between VIA and the Merit staff. Helping Merit understand how to implement was the first step in this empowerment. The next step was providing guidance on best practices and to establish standards. VIA's model allows Customers to create standards and share them across other production lines or even other manufacturing facilities. Engaging with VIA enabled Merit to start from an empty plant to a thriving, full manufacturing facility in one year with minimal support required from VIA. Merit anticipates that having the ability to grow at their own pace and do their implementations internally provided a cost savings of 75% over having a vendor complete the job for them.

"Having a system that empowers our employees to learn and support internally has opened up more opportunities for us as a global supplier. We are taking advantage of utilizing our employee's knowledge of MAN-IT to implement in other facilities and thus encourage standardizations across the board. This is not only a cost savings for Merit, but also a lesson in how to take control of our processes and continue to grow with this knowledge." Francesc Chavarria, Merit Global IT Manager

Utilizing VIA's implementation model has been mutually beneficial for both Merit and VIA. Having a Customer that takes ownership of its MES provides VIA with not only success stories, as detailed in this document, but also validation that customer driven implementation models do work. Having that flexibility in today's growing competitive market gives VIA a step up in creating lasting relationships with its Customers.

The Benefits

Benefits realized by utilizing VIA's implementation model:

- ✓ Ability to understand the inter-workings of MES through implementation and User Assembly Training.
- ✓ Flexibility to grow at a speed that works for the Customer.
- ✓ Empowerment to encourage and create best practices.
- ✓ Ability to share knowledge and production standards between production lines and production facilities.
- ✓ Cost savings by using this knowledge to implement and control internally.

Summary

By selecting and implementing VIA's MAN-IT MES, Merit ensures they are fully utilizing the capabilities of their investments to improve their manufacturing operations. Merit is a strong example of how VIA looks to empower its Customers and encourage system ownership.

VIA's commitment to being strong partners with our Customers is always our number one goal. The success of a Customer such as Merit solidifies our desire to provide top notch service while providing knowledge that allows our Customers to envision their own successes.