

Improve Supply Chain Performance by Learning from Past Supply Chain Issues

By Jim Campbell, Director of Product Marketing

Organizations using information collected with TraceLink's Agile Process Teams for Supply Chain Issue Management (APT-SCIM) solution to support Six Sigma projects have achieved up to 50% reduction in repeat deviations and as much as 96% reduction in defects per million.

The best way to continually improve a business is to learn from mistakes and update processes accordingly to prevent the issues from happening again. But many manufacturing organizations face major challenges when attempting to apply this principle to the supply chain.

Manufacturing companies invest significant resources in resolving supply chain issues to minimize the detrimental impact, but they often lack a recorded institutional memory of learnings from past incidents. As a result, critical resolution patterns are not discovered that could have been used to support faster issue resolution and root cause analysis for continuous process improvement. Instead, most supply chain teams send and receive incident reports via email and spreadsheets that do not retain a historical record of resolutions to similar problems. These companies rely on ad hoc processes to resolve issues, while more strategic supply chain leaders are digitalizing the supply chain issue management

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process and retaining the historical resolution history to resolve issues faster in the future.

Replacing ad hoc resolution processes based on phone calls, emails, video meetings, and spreadsheets with a collaborative, structured, digitalized process speeds up resolution time and allows for important resolution data to be captured and stored. TraceLink Agile Process Teams for Supply Chain Issue Management (APT-SCIM) guides users through a progression of easy-to-use, configurable dropdown lists, enabling them to capture dozens of data points and create a rich history of incidents to support faster issue resolution and continuous process improvement. Some of the data points captured by APT-SCIM include:

- Date and time the issue was reported
- Date and time of first response
- Final response dates or due dates
- Type of issue Issue priority (Critical, High, Medium, or Low)
- Supply chain partners involved and their location
- Final preventative action
- Financial impact
- Root cause

Supply chain teams can use this comprehensive history to acquire the answers they need quickly when issues arise. How long did it take to resolve a similar issue in the past? What was the root cause? What was the action taken to fix it? All of this information can be found in APT-SCIM.

As the issue resolution process draws to a conclusion, the subject matter experts assigned to resolve an issue can clearly document the root cause and identify the final preventative action taken. All of this information creates the institutional learning required to improve issue resolution processes, ensure consistency, and reduce resolution times.

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Analyzing historical issue resolution data, including root cause input provided by subject matter experts, also provides a strong basis for business process improvement. Using this data to support a process improvement methodology such as Six Sigma empowers supply chain teams to reduce or eliminate recurring business process and product quality defects.

Organizations using information collected with APT-SCIM to support Six Sigma projects have achieved up to 50% reduction in repeat deviations and as much as 96% reduction in defects per million. Ultimately, this reduction in defects per million will improve supply chain performance by ensuring that customers receive their orders on time, and in the right place.

Learn more: Download our supply chain issue management handbook today.

Learn more in our Supply Chain Issue Management Resource Center.

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Virtual Teams of Subject Matter Experts Eliminate Confusion in Supply Chain Issue Resolution

Agile Process Teams for Supply Chain Issue Management (APT-SCIM) enables you to digitally and dynamically create process teams on demand within an easy-to-use web or mobile interface.

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Top 5 Problems Impacting Supply Chain Issue Resolution Processes

While supply chain teams make their best efforts to resolve issues as quickly as possible, they have not had a digital system designed specifically to facilitate structured collaboration and work management between internal teams and supply chain partners—until now.
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