

# Perfect Working Order

TRIAD SYSTEMS SAYS ITS THREE-SIDED, INTEGRATED APPROACH TO CONSULTING HAS BEEN THE DRIVER FOR ALL ITS SUCCESS.

> TRIAD SYSTEMS



// Triad Systems helps businesses improve their operations with a client-driven approach.

BY CHRIS PETERSEN

**With its myriad moving parts all** working together to achieve a common goal, a business is like a machine. And, like a machine, a business can be optimized to improve performance. Triad Systems provides the machines of business with the lubrication they need to keep them running at peak performance, and the company's principals say their integration of hard and soft methods and

their three-fold approach are what make that possible and what set it apart from other consulting firms that merely advise and then walk away.

"We're very much an 'executing excellence' kind of firm," President David Kane says.

Triad Systems' clients have included such multinational firms as AstraZeneca, Alcoa, British Petroleum, DuPont, TD Williamson, Borealis and the United

States Veterans Administration. No matter the size of the client it serves, Triad Systems uses its expertise to help drive change inside the company by cooperating with its people, rather than dictating changes from outside. The keys to this process, Kane explains, are (1) a change management framework that blends a portfolio of hard tools with leading practice change management approaches and (2) the company's triad approach. It's a



going to get a principal-level person from us for the price of a senior consultant.”

Not only do clients get the benefit of Triad Systems’ highly experienced people, but they also get to remain in the driver’s seat because of the collaboration that exists between them and the firm. “It creates a very different atmosphere inside the project,” Houston says, adding that an outside observer would believe a Triad Systems project was a client-led effort – because it is a client-led effort.

“We’re not a firm that would come in and do a study that will just sit on a shelf,” Kane says. Working through the tricky issues associated with accelerating complex change, “We roll up our sleeves and work arm in arm with clients to help them achieve executional excellence and get the results they’re looking for,” he adds. “We do this while helping the client build their capability to use these tools and methodologies going forward.”



// Triad Systems says it concentrates heavily on optimizing its clients' value chains.

**Hidden Capacity**

Foreman says Triad Systems focuses on the operational side of clients’ businesses, with a heavy concentration on value chain optimization. This includes areas such as reducing inventory, increased throughput and improving the reliability of supply and delivery performance for customers. These improvements in tangible metrics are what Foreman describes as “unleashing the hidden capacity of [clients’] operations.”

Where Triad Systems does not concentrate much of its energy, however, is on pure cost reduction. Although the bottom line is ultimately what the firm sets out to improve, Houston says simply slashing costs and lowering overhead without paying attention to how those efforts impact

the rest of the operation are outdated.

The metric for improving a client’s operations is much more cross-functional and end-to-end than it would have been 15 years ago, Houston explains. He says clients and consultants have learned that narrowly focused efforts such as reducing specific materials costs are recognized today to have potentially adverse effects on the rest of the supply chain. As such, Triad Systems works with its clients to create a more holistic approach that takes the entire system into account.

“We make sure we’re not fixing one metric and breaking another,” Houston says. “We bring that language and that perspective.”

**‘Weathering the Storm’**

Kane says the firm is dealing with the impact of the global economic slowdown as much as any other. While cautiously optimistic, “weathering the storm” will be Triad System’s focus for the time being. Foreman says the firm is looking to the global market and other segments such as healthcare and the public sector in an effort to sustain its growth.

Triad Systems has a distinct advantage over other firms during this time, Kane says, because of its three-fold approach. He says clients are “solving meaningful operational and change management problems and realizing significant results at an accelerated pace.” *•mt*