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SOFTWARE

STORY

Take Your ERP Software For A Test Ride Sept. 2, 2002

Application-performance tools root out problems before implementations.

By Mary Hayes

A difficult enterprise resource planning software implementation can be disastrous. Agilent Technologies Inc., for example, says it lost more than \$100 million worth of business in its fiscal quarter ended July 31 because of problems with a new ERP system.

Application-performance management software can help companies find and fix problems before systems go live, and increasingly, app-performance management software is being aimed at ERP projects. Earlier this month, HyPerformix Inc. began offering Optimizer Model for SAP, which simulates the ERP system and addresses performance problems before the applications are deployed.

An inadequate underlying IT infrastructure can lead to a multitude of performance problems, so the software, which is an add-on module to HyPerformix Integrated Performance Suite, addresses infrastructure requirements. Ross Holman, former CIO of Southwest Airlines Co., used the suite while testing various new applications for the airline. He sees value in modules that focus on ERP.

"The more you want to model a specific piece of software, the more work you have to do," says Holman, who became an independent consultant after leaving the airline in February. "HyPerformix is creating some of those ERP and database components so the customers don't have to."

Watkins Motor Lines, an \$800 million-a-year freight hauler, is using software from Precise Software Solutions Ltd. for its upgrade to PeopleSoft 8. Watkins selected Precise i3 for the implementation after using it to resolve application performance problems that arose when migrating its DB2 mainframe environment to Oracle, says Marty Lawandus, Watkins' manager of technical services.

For Agilent, problems arose when it tried converting data in legacy systems to Oracle's 11i E-Business Suite. The testing-equipment manufacturer says it lost \$105 million in revenue and \$70 million in profits, as well as about a week's worth of production. Agilent says the problem wasn't with the quality of the Oracle software but, rather, the complexity of the ERP implementation.

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