

realworld

TIG has skills and technology in areas that are often left in the "too hard" basket by many suppliers, reports Anna Game-Lopata.

TIG's approach to the development of supply chain solutions involves providing cost effective solutions that work. "Often systems are complicated and possess too many features that make operating the system confusing," says TIG co-founder Stuart Ferguson. "TIG prefers proven, robust technologies, combined with designs that encompass the essentials, rather than all the 'bells and whistles' when deploying technology solutions within organisations."

"We work closely with organisations' operational staff to build a solution that fulfils most of their current needs," he says. "We then undertake a 'continuous improvement' approach based on the well known 80/20 rule, working with our customers on an ongoing basis to tweak, modify, and improve the computer systems as their organisations change and grow."

Ferguson observes that customers look to solve all their business needs in a single solution, but when they start the process, rarely know enough about the solutions and technology available to make appropriate decisions.

"Unfortunately this lends itself to projects that are oversized and fail to meet customers' needs, leaving businesses with a system that doesn't stack up while having consumed the majority of the budget."

"Ideally, customers want to increase their efficiency and profits," Ferguson says. "However, they often look for traditional methods of achieving this, like staff reduction instead of seeking throughput improvements and a smarter, supply chain encompassing fewer overheads."

The supply chain solution most

commonly implemented by TIG is its own MMT software. "This allows warehouse equipment to communicate with ERP and accounting systems," Ferguson explains. "It provides wireless terminal, pick to light, printing and RFID capabilities in the warehouse and communicates the results to any ERP system. MMT also links weighbridge, scales, and other factory automation systems to the ERP system."

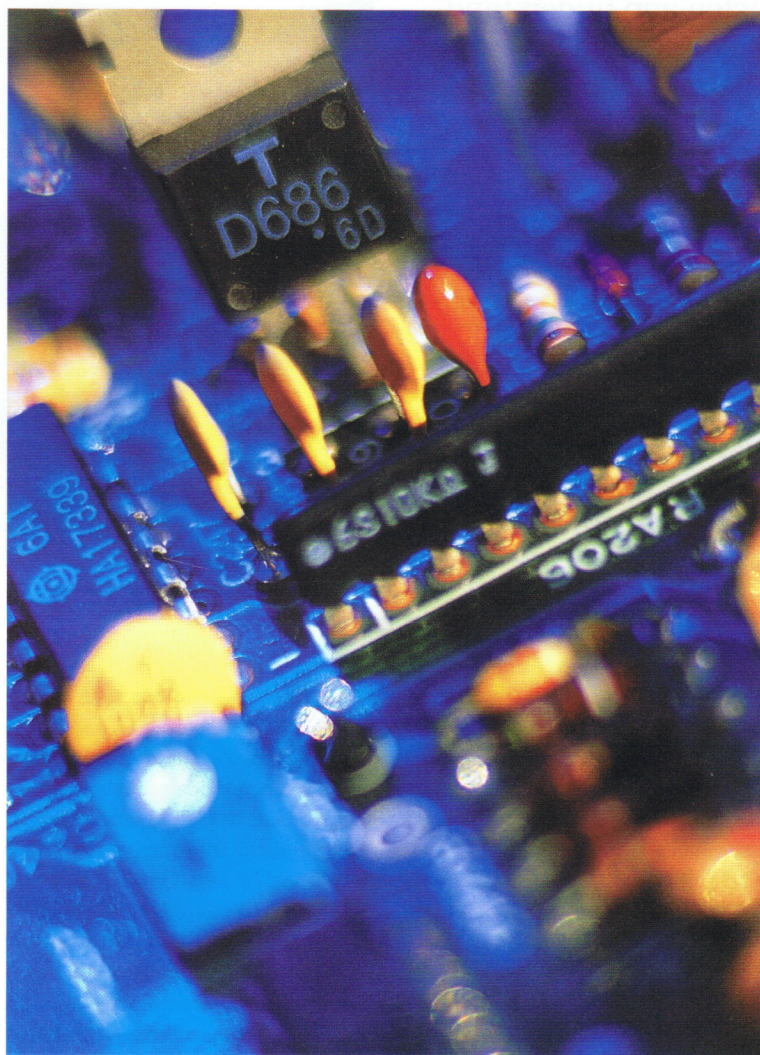
The TIG MMT system extends the reach of the SAP or ERP system into the real world. "It takes goods movement requests from the ERP system and presents them to warehouse operators via the wireless link to scanning terminals," Ferguson says. "MMT then updates the ERP system with the results in real time."

"With specialised configurations for SAP with the Warehouse Management module, and SAP with only Materials Management, the MMT system provides a feature rich presentation layer for the warehouse operators, connecting the real world with SAP in real time."

Stuart Ferguson predicts supply chain IT solutions of the future will provide more artificial intelligence. "Too often today, people are forced to manage supply chain processes effectively by correcting the failings of the IT solutions," he says. "The best 'next step' approach will include self learning artificial intelligence whereby the IT system will analyse the actions taken by its operators and use this in reconfiguring its decision making."

"If an operator always delays a specific customer's deliveries until Friday, the IT solution should learn and adjust to schedule deliveries for this customer only on Fridays," Ferguson says by way of example.

"The future of supply chain



TIG expertise is often brought in get struggling projects back on track.

requires artificially intelligent solutions, combined with full integration of all systems to provide organisations with a genuine platform for conducting their business effectively in an increasingly competitive world."

According to Ferguson, TIG is often brought in on projects that are struggling to meet all their objectives. "We analyse the immediate concerns and provide cost effective and fast solutions to help the cus-

tomers get back on track with their project," he says. "We provide specialist solutions where others cannot meet their commitments."

"Integrating information flow across all systems within the organisation is the major role of IT," Ferguson adds.

"As the demands on customers' supply chains increase, there are many gaps in the integration of technology that provide exciting opportunities for TIG."