

Global trade management software is no longer just for large corporations

BY ALAN M. FIELD

A sales manager at a global corporation gets a hot lead about a potential buyer in the Middle East. He needs to know if he can do business with this guy, or if this prospect is on the U.S. government's denied-party list. A marketing manager at a global retailer needs to know if the shipment of a new product he's expecting from China will be delayed because of problems with trade documentation. A customer service manager gets a call from an anxious buyer: "Where exactly is my stuff now? And when will I get it?" A human resources manager wants to quickly evaluate

whether an appealing new foreign national is on someone's list of potential terrorists.

Each of these people works in a different corporate department — sales, marketing, customer service, human resources — yet they all can benefit from real-time access to the broad array of services known as global trade management software. According to ARC Advisory Group, GTM tools address four market segments: customs and regulatory compliance; trade financing and financial settlement; ocean and air procurement and contract management; and global trade visibility.

Until recently, few departments apart from in-house trade specialists

at large corporations benefited from GTM software, given the time, cost and complexity of implementing such software. Wayne Slossberg, vice president of sales at GTM software provider QuestaWeb, said people from other corporate departments often view this kind of global trade information, but only in the form of Web-based reports that are prepared by the company's global trade department after the fact.

To address that issue — and to attract small and midsize companies to GTM software — vendors such as QuestaWeb, TradeBeam and Management Dynamics are expanding the impact of GTM data by partnering with providers of other



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business software, including Microsoft and Oracle. Their products integrate GTM-generated data with the data supplied by popular software for customer relationship management. CRM automates a broad range of data used by corporate departments that deal directly with customers and employees.

Using this approach, companies that already have CRM systems can access and use valuable GTM data without having to implement new software supplied directly by the GTM vendors. To access GTM data, employees open their existing CRM software on their computers. A typical GTM installment takes between 10 and 20 days, Slossberg said, but these kinds of services can be up and running from one day to the next.

For example, QuestaWeb recently unveiled a service that allows users of Microsoft's popular Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 to access GTM data in real time without having to click away from their Microsoft Dynamics CRM 4.0 screen, with its familiar interface.

"When you can tell companies that an application is integrated with an application they already have, it is always a plus," Slossberg said. "In their minds, the aggravation is over."

Corporate departments that don't specialize in global trade management — from sales to human resources to marketing — don't have to be trained in GTM software to benefit from GTM data that helps them be more compliant and productive.

"This kind of content could be used, for example, by sales managers without having to leave the application they are using," said Alex Thompson, TradeBeam's vice president of product strategy.

Added Slossberg: "You don't have to have GTM software to have access to GTM information." It's a lot like adding a new toolbar to a familiar Web browser, as opposed to

installing stand-alone software that requires special training. "Companies that embrace Microsoft are very comfortable about something they can use to access GTM data," he said.

Management Dynamics' latest product, Restricted Party Screening 5.0, allows even smaller companies to access its advanced screening engine, which automatically matches the names of potential customers, partners and employees against names on dozens of lists supplied by U.S. and foreign agencies.

Nathan Pieri, Management Dynamics' senior vice president of marketing and product development, said it takes just hours for a small to midsize company to implement at a cost often as low as \$10,000. Corporate users only have to upload their usual Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, filled with CRM-related information, to the online service.

"We support any system that can write to a CRM spreadsheet," Pieri said, including products supplied by Microsoft, Salesforce.com, Siebel, SAP and other vendors.

John Fontanella, vice president of research at AMR Research, agreed that this approach is becoming increasingly attractive for smaller companies. "You don't need your own GTM software. You can query the content database of GTM data and bring the data back to use. This becomes just another step in the work flow."

The growing importance of global markets is another factor. Pieri said many smaller companies recognize that they need to automate global trade data across various departments or miss out on the many opportunities afforded by today's export boom. "With the devaluation of the dollar, exports are surging, and they realize that automation takes the pressure off their staff," he said.

This kind of software integration can be customized to meet

the unique CRM needs of each corporate department. Different corporate departments access only those kinds of global trade data that are relevant to their jobs, rather than struggle to deploy the entire new software product. Not everyone will deploy the complete GTM system, Thompson said, because they may not need all of the content and tools that such a system provides. "We are not forcing anything on people," he said. "We are only enabling flexible deployment."

TradeBeam and Management Dynamics are partnering with Oracle, the second-largest vendor of ERP (enterprise resource planning) software aimed at companies that have multiple divisions. That way, users of an Oracle software product known as the International Trade Management Adapter can access the global trade content and tools supplied by TradeBeam and Management Dynamics.

Larger companies that need access to all of the GTM content and tools supplied by these companies can opt to deploy the entire system directly from the GTM vendors.

For all the added power and appeal of today's marriage of GTM and CRM, neither is a panacea for companies struggling to manage the complexities of today's global supply chains. In a recent report, ARC Advisory Group issued this warning: Global trade patterns are so complex, and regulations are changing so rapidly that "staying on top of trade content is nearly an impossible task." ♦

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