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AUTO EXECUTIVE DEVELOPS PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT BREAKTHROUGH THAT GUIDES OEMS AND THEIR SUPPLIERS BEYOND THE TOYOTA WAY

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI – Mike Juras, CEO of Vertare LLC, took his early love of mathematics and visualization and saw in the formulas and equations relationships that no one else seemed to notice or care about. High school trigonometry was fun to him. In college he took 24 math courses for the same reason. He then spent a 40-year career in the automotive industry engineering cars and trucks, all the while experimenting and learning how to take relationships and the cold reality of numbers and apply them to human needs and decision-making in the pursuit of perfection, which is the Toyota Way.

Toyota intuitively evolved to three enabling principles for excellence. Abraham Maslow discovered the five levels of basic human needs. Similarly, Mike Juras and his team of experts have created a new way of thinking about and dealing with complex business operations by applying mathematics, science, and psychology to digitally-based product realization technology and organizational operations.

This new thinking, according to Juras, is “The breakthrough in product development that’s beyond the Toyota Way. No one else has it. We’re making the invisible interactions of business visible by transforming the processes into pictures that are easy to understand.”

His goal is to prove it to skeptics and share it with the North American auto industry and the state of Michigan, which he has long been part of, rising to GM Chief Engineer and Director of Engineering at General Motors before becoming Executive Vice President for a Tier I supplier where he developed a global operating system and initiated integration of a major European acquisition into the company.

He calls it Enterprise Product Realization™, a unique process performance system that visually organizes the product development process from idea to manufacture. Developed by Vertare and software-developer Campfire Interactive in Ann Arbor, EPR will be more powerful than the Toyota Production System when fully implemented, says Juras.

“Henry Ford once said that there is no progress in finding a better way to do useless things,” says Juras. “EPR enables product teams to identify the useful content, apply lean principles to those processes and eliminate unnecessary activities. This is what increases effectiveness, not just efficiency. Products are not only made faster, but better, which provides more value to customers by delivering the right product at the right time.”

For those who understand the importance of growing a more globally competitive business environment, the potential for applying EPR systems not only to manufacturing, but to almost any business to improve the performance of human interactions – the most complex of all – is unlimited.

EPR enables companies to combine and integrate performance-improved processes using technology, methodology, and learning with a highly visual and communicative process-operating system to create enterprise-wide consciousness, resourcefulness, creativity and responsiveness. A universal process translator, and instant access to information and communication, more effectively guides product teams and suppliers through the development process. The universal translator allows each project its own custom-tailored product.

The combination of increased computing power, software development, digitized data and the Internet along with new methods of thinking, learning and communication has shifted the focus of manufacturing capabilities today from machine to man. Juras says this confluence of technology and knowledge now enables the coupling of business thinking with the physical and social sciences through principles of Complex Adaptive Systems Theory to create a virtual business system much like the Japanese Keiretsu.

What Juras and his associates have done, in layman's terms, is create a *single-brain organism with its own digital nervous system* that guides human thinking and creates new learning and opportunities for creativity, innovation, and self-actualization – the latter described by Maslow as a person's need to be and do that which the person was "born to do."

EPR guides all workers and suppliers involved in an enterprise through the highly complex, often fragmented business interactions of a product development program by collecting, organizing, and visually transforming the data into easy-to-understand pictures that are broadcast throughout the enterprise.

"EPR guides the human collaboration, which involves mission, values, financials, and the culture needed to enable mechanical innovations to take place in the form of continuous improvement," says Juras. "This combined effort is what has led to the development of customer-focused products like voice-activated navigation, tire pressure monitoring systems, and infrequent oil changes, along with complex, feature-oriented products such as modular instrument panels with integrated HVAC and digital entertainment systems."

The scope and power of Enterprise Product Realization goes beyond product development processes, adds Juras, a life-long Michigander and an engineering graduate of the University of Detroit and the University of Michigan where he earned a Master's Degree in Engineering Mechanics.

"EPR's ability to create virtual systems enables government, universities, and businesses to build not only a knowledge-based automotive industry but a knowledge-based economy that is the key to our state's and nation's future," says Juras. "Government provides direction and funding. Universities provide the research and development. Businesses create the products that produce jobs and profits. Enabling the three to collaborate and innovate in a new virtual way is exciting to say the least."