



Chapter VIII

The Benefits of Data Warehousing at Whirlpool

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In today's competitive, high-velocity business environment, companies are focusing their attention on several key areas, including:

- *Incremental continuous quality improvement;*
- *More radical redesign of business processes;*
- *Supply chain management;*
- *Improved customer orientation; and*
- *Globalization of business operations.*

At Whirlpool, data warehousing is providing important support in all of these critical areas (see Table 1). To illustrate, Whirlpool's data warehouse enables quality engineers to easily track the performance of component

parts. This allows the engineers to assess new components that are being field tested, to quickly detect problems with particular parts, and to identify the high and low quality suppliers. From a different perspective, suppliers can check on the performance of the parts they supply and, consequently, can manage proactively the quality provided to Whirlpool. Purchasing managers have parts information from around the world so that they can find the lowest-cost, highest quality part available on a global basis. This case study briefly describes Whirlpool, the business need that suggested a data warehouse, the approval process, and the data warehouse that was built. It describes how the data warehouse is accessed, how users are trained and supported, and the major applications and benefits. The lessons learned also are described to benefit those companies that are implementing or thinking about implementing data warehousing. Like most companies, Whirlpool is continually changing. This case study describes Whirlpool and its data warehousing initiative through the end of 1997.

THE WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION

Whirlpool Corporation is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of home appliances. The Whirlpool family consists of over 45,000 people who manufacture fine appliances in 12 countries and market them under 11 major brand names. The company is based in Benton Harbor, Michigan and reaches out to approximately 140 countries around the world. It is the only major home appliance company with a leadership position in North America, Europe, and Latin America, plus a growing presence in Asia.

Whirlpool began as a small family-owned business in 1911, and it now ranks 159 in the Fortune 500. The corporate vision for the company fosters growth and progress: *Whirlpool, in its chosen lines of business, will grow with new opportunities and be the leader in an ever-changing global market.* This vision is manifested in Whirlpool's Worldwide Excellence System (WES), its

Table 1. Key strategic areas for Whirlpool

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incremental continuous quality improvement • more radical design of business processes • supply chain management • improved customer orientation • globalization of business operations

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