CARON®
INTERNATIONAL

The mandate:

- Migrate the forecasting application from mainframe to Windows
- Integrate with Client/Server system run on Oracle/HP
- Improve automation of forecasts and integration with other applications
- Use forecasts to drive manufacturing planning

Caron International is a major manufacturer of acrylic yarns, based in Washington, North Carolina. It produces a wide variety of yarns and craft kits. Some of these yarns are sold under brand names such as *Sayell*e, *Wintuk*, *Simply Soft* as well as certain Private Label brands such as *Kmart Kolormatch*. Additional product lines include *National Yarn Craft*s, *Natura* and *WonderArt* kits.

Caron International's systems were previously entirely mainframe technology, comprising both in-house manufacturing and financials plus customer service functions tailored to its business. A forecasting module was built-in, but spreadsheets were used for many parts of the business that were not set up on the mainframe. The lack of integration between mainframe forecasting functions and ad-hoc spreadsheet analysis resulted in a great deal of manual intervention. In all, several thousand items needed to be forecasted on a 13-period cycle, in order to drive Manufacturing planning.

In 1996 a decision was made to start replacing the mainframe systems with new Client/Server technology. Caron chose *Point.Man* Customer Service and Financial applications modules from

> "With TimeTrends, we were able to generate a forecast for *all* of our individual products, something that was not possible before using spreadsheets and other tools."
>
> *Kevin Junger, Marketing*

Pivotpoint, Inc., run on HP hardware and an Oracle database. *TimeTrends*® from ALT-C Systems Inc. was the forecasting system of choice to integrate with *Point.Ma*n.

TimeTrends® was installed as a turnkey project by ALT-C Systems. The set-up involved capturing product history from the mainframe, although further system updates are now performed directly from the Client/Server system. Data is extracted by querying the Oracle Sales tables in *Point.Man* using *Microsoft*® *Acces*s, which is then updated into *TimeTrends*® for batch reforecasting. Crystal Reports Professional from Seagate Software is now used to generate customized reports. The output of *TimeTrends*® is used to help plan required stock levels, order points and raw materials requirements.

Benefits experienced from the implementation of *TimeTrends*® have been primarily to automate the forecasting for all SKUs, and to eliminate nearly all manual keying of data. Forecast review is enhanced by the graphical features and the extensive modeling and "what-if" capabilities of *TimeTrends*®. Forecast models can be modified to take into account promotional events and seasonal profiles. *TimeTrends*® ' data can now easily be exported or shared over the network with other PC applications such as *Lotus 1-2-3*® running under *Windows*®. Reporting can be customized at the user level. The forecast can also be used to identify capacity constraints, through the use of attributes such as dye color codes, size codes, and more which are tied to each forecasted item.

TimeTrends®
Forecasting Solutions for Business