



## Inventory management for improved visibility and planning



Since replacing its spreadsheet based process with RapidResponse, Nimble Storage has realized many benefits, including increased visibility, condensed planning cycle times and reduced inventory levels.

Demands from enterprises for better data storage performance and protection continues to grow. As a leading provider of flash-optimized data storage solutions, Nimble Storage makes it possible for IT to keep up with these demands. The result is high-performance, efficient storage for mainstream IT applications, ranging from midsize deployments with hundreds of users to large enterprises with thousands of employees.

Headquartered in San Jose, California, Nimble Storage is a rapidly growing company with a powerful support model that is unique in their industry. The company has a commitment to deliver the highest level of support and customer satisfaction in the storage industry with around-the-clock resources and four hour onsite parts replacement service.

At Nimble Storage, service support is a critical part of the business strategy and is often the main reason customers operating under mission critical environments decide to leverage their services.

### Business challenges

With customer satisfaction as the critical focus for the service function, and their install base getting larger, the company faced challenges getting visibility into its more than 70 global inventory hubs and spare parts depots for its service parts planning business.

Prior to leveraging Kinaxis® RapidResponse®'s inventory management capabilities, Nimble was using a spreadsheet-based process to manage its service parts planning business. Data was imported and copied from a variety of sources and some of the key data was maintained only in Excel spreadsheets.

Planning service parts supply was performed twice a week and took five hours per cycle, for a total of ten hours per week. The data was manually input into Excel from multiple systems including CRM, ERP and third-party data sources. 80% of the processing time included data collection and data clean up with approximately 50 steps to complete the planning process. This resulted in the process being error prone and not as responsive as was required for the growing business. In addition, the team spent a minimal amount of time on analysis and proactive planning.

Nimble needed to make an investment in supply chain software to support the expanding business and its operational needs. These were the drivers for implementing RapidResponse.

Kinaxis offered the necessary capabilities to manage the spare parts business with a superior level of speed, flexibility, and scalability, thus Nimble could achieve visibility into inventory at their various hubs, depots and parts in transit, to better support their growing install base.

### Customer service first

"Nimble's world-class customer service agreements are incredibly important to our business. As a past RapidResponse user, I know the breadth of capabilities and the flexibility of the solution. With RapidResponse deployed, we have the confidence we can keep up with our growing install base to achieve visibility of inventory at hubs, depots and parts in transit. We have the ability to quickly perform many "what-if" questions we face on a daily basis and have already reduced the time to make decisions to help our relationships with our customers."

**Stacey Cornelius**, VP of Operations, Nimble

### WHAT IS "WHAT-IF" ANALYSIS?

Teams across the organization can collaborate on multiple "what-if" action alternatives to make quick and informed decisions.

- Ultimately, it all comes down to making better decisions faster
- Take action with a full and detailed understanding of the projected impact
- Make decisions in complete consideration of other available alternatives
- Analyze events and activities with greater speed and accuracy, which will drive down planning cycles and improve customer response times and service levels

## The RapidResponse solution

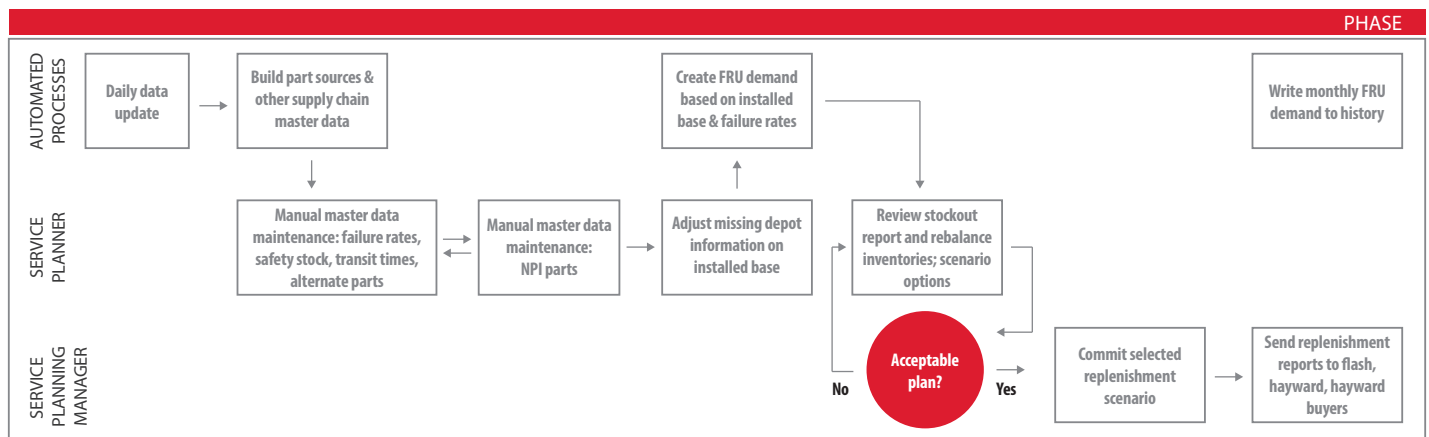
The main users of RapidResponse at Nimble are from service logistics for spares planning. Data is automatically collected daily from the following sources: CRM, ERP and 3rd party data sources.

The implementation of RapidResponse has shifted the focus of the process to pro-active analysis and quicker execution. Further, the spares planning process is now performed daily and can be completed in less than 30 minutes (a savings of 7.5 hours per week).

With a cloud-based inventory management application in place, the business process has changed in the following ways:

- ▶ Excel is no longer used for spares planning
- ▶ All data sources are consolidated automatically
- ▶ More time spent on analysis, not data entry and validation

The rapid scenario analysis capability in RapidResponse allows Nimble to instantly model and understand the impact of a change to inventory requirements driven by install base and field failures. With deep "what-if" analysis capabilities, RapidResponse enables the service group to answer questions such as: Which depot requires additional inventory? Are new depots required? And, what is the impact to overall network inventory requirement? with the level of speed and accuracy needed.



*Automated and streamlined service planning process using RapidResponse*

## Results speak for themselves

The RapidResponse implementation was completed in Q1 of 2014 and has offered immediate value to Nimble's growing user base. The operational and financial benefits of this deployment have come from:

- ▶ Increased visibility to data for service parts planning
- ▶ Condensed planning cycle times
- ▶ Faster and more reliable scenario planning
- ▶ Reduced inventory levels
- ▶ Maintained or improved customer service levels and on-time delivery

Specifically the team realized:

- ▶ On time delivery to customers across 70 inventory depots > 98%
- ▶ Inventory availability > 98%
- ▶ Service inventory as a % of installed base COGS < 5%
- ▶ Weekly spare parts planning process went from 5 hours to < 30 minutes

The business process has been positively impacted in the following areas:

- ▶ Productivity – Planner's time is freed from manual data entry to do more analysis
- ▶ Pro-active execution – spares planned and placed for execution even before asset is shipped
- ▶ Accuracy - Spare parts planning execution
- ▶ Effectiveness - Effectively work with complex data sources and execute the planning cycle more frequently
- ▶ Scalability – Allows other users to learn/execute the process

The unique capabilities of RapidResponse that provide differentiated value for Nimble includes:

- ▶ Real time computation – what if analysis
- ▶ Quick learning curve to train new users
- ▶ Ease of navigation

## Next steps

Nimble Storage decided to approach the RapidResponse deployment in strategic increments. Stacey Cornelius, vice president of operations at Nimble views RapidResponse as a single planning system with many capabilities that can be applied to a variety of business processes based on the ease of use and flexibility of the tool.

Given the business critical importance of customer support and satisfaction, it made sense for Nimble to start their supply chain software deployment with the service parts planning business. The company's future goals for RapidResponse are to expand the planning capabilities beyond spares planning to include:

- ▶ Demand planning
- ▶ Supply planning
- ▶ Sales inventory operations planning (SIOP)
- ▶ Order scheduling
- ▶ Cost roll up

Because RapidResponse is supported by a single data model and analytics engine, the current implementation will lay the foundation for the expansion of the additional supply chain applications. Kinaxis offered the necessary capabilities to manage the spare parts business with a superior level of speed, flexibility, and scalability, thus Nimble could achieve visibility into inventory at their various hubs, depots and parts in transit, to better support their growing install base.



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## About Kinaxis Inc.

Offering the industry's only concurrent planning solution, Kinaxis helps organizations around the world revolutionize their supply chain planning. Kinaxis RapidResponse, our cloud-based supply chain management software, connects your data, processes and people into a single harmonious environment. With a consolidated view of the entire supply chain, you can plan expected performance, monitor progress and respond to disconnects when reality hits. RapidResponse lets you know sooner and act faster, leading to reduced decision latency, and improved operational and financial performance. We can prove it. From implementation to expansion, we're here to help our customers with every step of their supply chain journey.

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