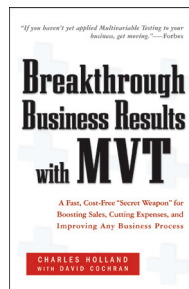




## QUALITY CONTROL

# Proof Is in the Test

Ed Mueller, CEO of **WILLIAMS-SONOMA INC.** (WSM), says he started using Multivariable Testing (MVT) roughly 15 years ago to test profit-improvement ideas and now employs it at Williams-Sonoma to look for efficiencies in sales and operations. One example resulted in substantially growing catalogue sales while driving incremental business to its Website and retail chains, he notes. “The beauty of the MVT process is that it uses your own ideas instead of coming up with new ones,” he explains. “In a nutshell, it enables you to test many business-improvement solutions simultaneously and discover those solutions that help and those that hurt.” Adds Mueller: “I’ve never had a failure.”



## FACTOID

**R.R. DONNELLEY & SONS CO. (RRD) SAYS MVT WAS ABLE TO INCREASE ITS BINDERY RUN TIME BY NEARLY 25 PERCENT, WORTH \$1.25 MILLION PER YEAR.**

MVT is a 12-step process that tests ideas that don’t require cost increases and sorts them based on level of efficiency, says Charles Holland, Ph.D.,

author of *Breakthrough Business Results with MVT*. The process takes a list of cost-free ideas generated by the company and runs it through an MVT screening. Each test is a statistically engineered combination of ideas, he explains. Afterward the client company conducts a refining

MVT and acts on the conclusions, he adds. Other companies that have used MVT include **LOWE’S COMPANIES INC.** (LOW), **BASF AG** (BF), **DUPONT CO.** (DD) and **R.R. DONNELLEY & SONS CO.** (RRD), according to Holland. — EJ