SAP Solution Brief
SAP ERP

SAP Solution Sales Configuration

A Faster, Easier Way to Configure Complex Solutions

Quick Facts

Summary

The SAP® Solution Sales Configuration application empowers everyone on your sales force to quickly bundle the components that make up complex solution offerings – the kind that often include hardware, software, and services. It makes it easier for you to meet increasingly complex market requirements – allowing you to increase your margin, block out the competition, and claim more share of wallet from customers who want more.

Business Challenges

- Protect customer relationships
- Move from product sales to higher-value solution sales
- Quickly bundle complex components while ensuring technical feasibility and commercial efficiency

Key Features

- **Solution configuration** – Use an innovative configuration engine to quickly design multifaceted solutions from the bottom up
- **Sales and service integration** – Leverage existing sales and service data and processes in your SAP software environment to speed up configuration and minimize maintenance
- **Data modeling** – Make your technical people more productive with an innovative Eclipse plug-in for modeling solution data using collaborative and distributed development techniques
- **Interactive pricing** – Automatically update pricing as you configure solutions without going back to the quotation document
- **Analytics** – Optimize your offering for high-margin sales by understanding what sells best

Business Benefits

- **Accelerate the sales cycle** for complex solution offerings by generating more quotes in less time
- **Improve sales force efficiency** with intuitive configuration tools and a familiar interface
- **Increase sales margins** by analyzing your sales efforts for optimum effectiveness
- **Increase your share of wallet** by blocking out the competition with tailor-fit customer offerings that help maintain long-term relationships

For More Information

Call your local SAP representative today.

It's an axiom of the business world that companies should sell solutions rather than products. After all, customers want a clean floor, not a mop. But in sectors such as engineering, construction, high tech, and many others, selling solutions can be a complex undertaking. The SAP® Solution Sales Configuration application helps you cut through the complexity, so that you can configure multiple solution components – including hardware, software, and services – quickly and efficiently.

Shifting from product sales to solution sales can help move a company up the sales value chain. The experience of working closely with customers to solve their problems with complex systems brings you into partnership. This solidifies relationships, helps you prove the value of your own organization, and allows you to claim more share of the customer's wallet – while blocking out the competition.

But as solutions become more complex, configuring them takes more time and effort. The company that can generate quotes quickly is the company that can expand market share and succeed in a highly competitive arena.

To configure complex solution offerings, however, many companies use largely manual processes that require an inordinate amount of time and effort. Solution knowledge is often located with a few seasoned salespeople who work in idiosyncratic ways, rather than baked into the configuration process. Other members of the sales team can find it difficult to be productive.

In an attempt to help automate tasks, many companies try to enlist standard product configuration tools and processes to aid solution configuration. The product and solution approaches to configuration, however, could not differ more. Product configuration follows a top-down approach where you identify the product characteristics, define a maximum bill of materials, and then mass-produce the product, offering it to all takers.

Solution configuration involves a bottom-up approach where you analyze functional requirements, define components that address the requirements, resolve any interdependencies, and combine it all in a single package that is tailor-fit to the customer. Whereas product configuration is restrictive and focused on one particular design, solution configuration is dynamic and without boundaries.

The SAP Solution Sales Configuration application empowers your sales team to navigate this more dynamic process with greater effectiveness. In the end, you get the flexibility you need to quickly configure complex solutions that meet your customer's needs and drive profitability.

AN ENGINE FOR PROFITABLE BUSINESS GROWTH

SAP Solution Sales Configuration starts with a robust, scalable configuration engine – one based on the product configuration engine used in the SAP ERP, SAP Customer Relationship Management, and SAP E-Commerce applications.

Giving you the flexibility to quickly perform bottom-up configurations, this engine orchestrates existing product knowledge bases for solution design purposes. This allows you to leverage current investments in data models for product configuration, thus minimizing maintenance chores.

For example, the software can automatically pull the knowledge base for an existing server product into the solution configuration process – without requiring you to perform tedious data migration chores for the solution you're designing. All of this happens behind the scenes, freeing your salespeople to focus on selling complex solutions rather than on the technology that supports it.

INTEGRATION TO MAKE SALES EASIER AND MORE EFFECTIVE

SAP Solution Sales Configuration provides a familiar interface based on existing product configuration software from SAP. This minimizes the need for retraining. More important, the software integrates with all the SAP-based sales and service applications you run every day. This is something that competing offerings cannot claim. With SAP Solution Sales Configuration, the data you use to manage your sales processes is the same data used to help you quickly design complex solutions. This gives you a low total cost of ownership (TCO) because you don't have to spend time and energy maintaining constantly changing data conversion interfaces.

A SOLUTION MODELING ENVIRONMENT BASED ON ECLIPSE

At the technical level, defining a model for solution configuration is a lot like Java-based object-oriented programming. Based on input from our customers, we've responded with a plug-in that allows you to use Eclipse – the popular Java programming environment – to build your models.

The Eclipse plug-in gives you a familiar environment that allows you to leverage existing technical skills in support of solution configuration. The plug-in also enables you to store your configuration model in a centralized location with full version-control functionality. This allows your team to collaborate more effectively while keeping your model consistent.

MORE QUOTES IN LESS TIME WITH INTERACTIVE PRICING

One of the challenges for configuring complex solutions is the ability to constantly update the overall solution price as you add components. Often, a sales rep needs to close the configuration, return to the quotation documents, get the new price, and add it to the configuration. This process adds time to the sales cycle and can impact sales effectiveness.

With interactive pricing supported by SAP Solution Sales Configuration, you are liberated from this arduous process. For every component you add, remove, or modify, the software automatically updates the solution price. This is extremely important when most solutions are configured in the context of clear budget constraints. With the ability to automatically update prices, your sales representatives can generate more quotes in less time – which helps you get your proposals in front of customers before the competition.

A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WORKS

It may sound obvious, but achieving profitable growth requires an understanding of which solutions are profitable. In solution sales, gaining this insight is not as easy as one might think. Not only do you need to understand demand for given configurations, you also need to know how pricing for various components within the solution can impact overall profitability. This is difficult to understand using spreadsheets and intuition.

SAP Solution Sales Configuration helps you address this challenge with a data extractor that allows you to analyze solution sales in the analytical tool of your choice. Simply pull the data into offerings such as the SAP NetWeaver® Business Warehouse component or SAP BusinessObjects™ solutions and go from there.

With SAP Solution Sales Configuration, you can dig deep into data for insights on issues such as which components sell most frequently at the highest margin – by type of customer, industry, or whatever makes most sense to you. Based on this information, you can then optimize your offerings – both to meet your customers' needs better and to maximize your margins.

THE BENEFITS OF BUNDLING

When it all comes down to it, a solution is simply a bundling of components – whether it includes high-tech machinery, the software to make it run, or the services to put it all together. But when you depend primarily on the knowledge of individual salespeople to configure these solutions, you're holding the rest of your sales organization back.

SAP Solution Sales Configuration helps you turn individual knowledge into organizational knowledge – so that your entire sales force can be productive and efficient all the time. By enabling you to bundle components into custom-fit solutions for your customers, the software helps you quickly generate quotes and speed up the sales cycle. This gives you tremendous advantage. While your competition is still figuring out how to best design a solution, you can be having a face-to-face discussion with the customer based on a clearly defined,

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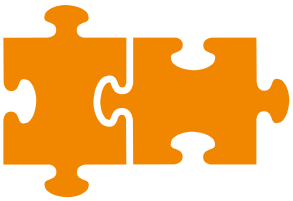

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accurately priced offering that meets its needs. Powerful analytics, meanwhile, enable you to do it all in a way that maximizes sales margins. In the end, this helps you sell more of the complex solutions that your customers need to succeed. This, in turn, helps you build stronger relationships and claim more share of wallet for years to come.

LEARN MORE

To find out more about how SAP Solution Sales Configuration can help you sell complex solutions with greater efficiency and effectiveness, call your SAP representative today.