CONFIGURE ONE

Configuring and quoting multi-million dollar air filtration systems in less than 10 minutes

Case Study

Flanders Corporation

Conducting business the same way using catalogs and drawings was no longer an option for Flanders Corporation. A leader in air filtration, the company's expansion into new markets was hampered by its antiquated systems. The bottleneck in the process was the time required to produce a drawing, up to a month if there was a backlog in engineering.

Early in 2012, Flanders introduced Configure One Enterprise Product Configurator® and Real-Time 2D drawing module. Today, insides sales, regional sales managers, and independent reps can generate a drawing and quotation for a complex million-dollar air filtration system in about 10 minutes.

In addition, Configure One has helped eliminate configuration errors and misunderstandings with customers. Since the introduction of Configure One, sales in the commercial side of the business have grown about 10%.

AAF | Flanders®

Since 1950, Flanders Corporation has been the leader in air filtration. Flanders produces the most complete and diverse product line in the air filtration industry. Leading names in the industrial, pharmaceutical, healthcare, microelectronics, biotech and nuclear industries currently use Flanders' products.

Antiquated Systems

When Charlie Kwiatkowski joined Flanders as Senior Vice President, Commercial & Industrial Sales, he had the opportunity to review the company's sales processes and how it interacted with its customers. "I immediately saw problems with the way we were selling," said Kwiatkowski. "Things hadn't changed since the 1970s, and our competitors described our sales methodology as antiquated."

Flanders lengthy sales process relied on obtaining and interpreting a lot of detailed information from the customer. "A customer would call a regional manager or our sales department and request a drawing for a specific product," said Kwiatkowski.

"The sales person would gather the information from the customer and request a drawing from engineering. If the information was incomplete or incorrect, the sales person would have to resort to contacting the customer for further details. Depending on the workload, it could take up to a month to receive a drawing."

Customers would often request changes, which resulted in another two to three weeks for an amended drawing. Overall, the process was cumbersome and time consuming and opened up the possibility for misunderstandings and errors.

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Vision for the Future

Before joining Flanders, Kwiatkowski saw a rudimentary product configurator at a competitor and understood its potential to streamline the Configure Price Quote (CPQ) process.

"When I joined Flanders, I explained my vision to my boss and he supported the initiative to search for product configuration and quotation software. Our evaluation team included sales directors and representatives from engineering. Our IT manager knew of Configure One and invited them in. We explained our problems and what we were looking for in a new system. Configure One really took the time to understand our business, and what we were trying to accomplish."

Flanders selected Configure One's CPQ solution and the Real Time 2D module. "We selected Configure One because they were the only company that really addressed the entire quote-to-production process," said Kwiatkowski. "There are a lot of software products that handle quotes and drawings, but Configure One was the only one that took the process all the way through to manufacturing."

The Real Time 2D module enables users to create a 2D product drawing (view, modify, zoom, and pan) in real time inside Configure One. This component allows users to see the impact of dimensional inputs, feature, and option selections on the 2D drawing as they are making their choices.

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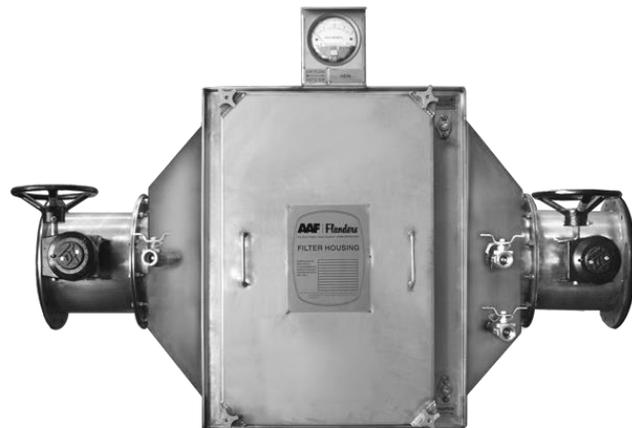
Flanders implemented Configure One in early 2012, and has continually added more and more product lines. Kwiatkowski explained: "We started with the commercial side of our business. This included clean room equipment and filters."

Business Expansion

Flanders had been looking to expand its business and enter the Custom Air Handler market. This required working with architects and engineers who were looking for a fast response to sales inquiries. "When we researched that market, we found that every Custom Air Handler had some kind of product configurator," said Kwiatkowski. "We needed to be able to generate a quote within 30 minutes. This objective would have been impossible without Configure One."

Flanders' first priority was to address the commercial side of the business, but soon discovered that Configure One's flexibility could accommodate the retail side as well. "Originally, we never thought of using Configure One for the retail side of the business," said Kwiatkowski. "But now some of our large retail customers, such as home improvement stores, are using Configure One via our web site to help their customers select the correct air filter."

Today, all of Flanders sales staff use Configure One including the inside sales staff, regional sales managers and sales directors. "We also use Configure One as a training tool," said Kwiatkowski.

"We are now confident that all the drawings we produce are correct."

"The beauty of Configure One is that you can't continue to build a product until you have gathered all the information and answered all the questions. This has shown that some of our sales people don't know the products as well as they thought. Because the information in Configure One is accurate, we are now confident that all the drawings we produce are correct."

Integration

"If the price of stainless steel fluctuates, Configure One will reflect the latest cost."

Kwiatkowski recognized that Configure One is only part of Flanders' overall business systems. Integration with Flanders other back office systems was key to maximizing potential benefits. "We have integrated Configure One with our ERP system, Infor's ERP BPCS/LX." We are in the process of integrating Configure One with our costing system. This will enable us to eliminate the need for a price book," said Kwiatkowski.

"We manufacture a lot of custom housings in stainless steel. If the price of stainless steel fluctuates, Configure One will reflect the latest cost. This will prevent quoting a project and losing money due to an increase in raw material cost. In the future, we plan to integrate Configure One with our freight system, so we can obtain an accurate shipping cost."

Results

Configure One has transformed Flanders' quote-to-product timeline from a matter of days into a matter of minutes. "Today, to produce a quote for a million dollar system takes about 10 minutes," said Kwiatkowski. "Prior to Configure One, the same quote would take several days. This quick response gives us a competitive edge, as we are the first to get the information to the customer."

"The other major benefit is accuracy. Previously, there was a lot of guesswork involved in creating a quote. Today, we have captured 60 years of product knowledge and made it available with Configure One."

With Configure One, Flanders has turned it's quoting process into a competitive advantage. "Our sales reps can walk into a customer's office with a laptop, tablet, or smartphone, configure a product immediately, and generate a drawing and a quote. No other company in the air filtration industry can match that," said Kwiatkowski.

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>
> **Charlie Kwiatkowski**
> Senior Vice President
> Commercial & Industrial Sales
> Flanders Corporation

Configure One is a leading provider of web-based product configurator and CPQ (configure price quote) software. Configure One has enabled both large and small companies to increase revenues and decrease costs by automating the way they sell and process orders for configurable, multi-option, and customizable products.

CONFIGURE ONE

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