



Configure, Price, Quote

A very common term in today's market space, especially if your company has complex products. You may have been through a selection process for software in your career. It's a difficult and time consuming process.

Even selecting appropriate vendors/suppliers to review can be a daunting task. How do you narrow down the list to the appropriate ones to review? Which are right for you? You can't just select the companies that have visited your office. Simply enter the words "Product Configurator" into one of the popular search engines. You might be surprised to find 1,000,000 to 2,000,000+ hits. Most of these companies you have not heard of and yes, most are not appropriate. Getting to a manageable short list is no simple task for most.

Just coordinating all the vendors and trying to get through the sales hype and defining the requirements and communicating that information to a group of people on the vendor sales team takes time. The vendor sales team may or may not have experience with your complexity, your products or understand what you want, or how to solve your problem.

You'll find that it's not like an ERP Selection

Matching the software supplier's "features" to your requirements is relatively easy until you get to a CRM, sales or manufacturing configurator. No two configurator vendors or suppliers use the same terminology. It's not like selecting an ERP application where terms mean the same thing and you have heard of most of the suppliers. So in the SAP Configurator, the word characteristics means features, attributes or options in other applications.

Many suppliers frequently just want to show you what "nice features" they have in their product and show the "stuff" they have done that probably isn't standard in their solution yet anyway, but it looks really good. Will they provide you with a customized demonstration? Perhaps, but then what? Ask them how they built the business rules.



There are some very credible firms with some very compelling software solutions. During the past few years several configuration application companies have begun to focus on specific industries such as pumps and valves solutions, office furniture or building products. There are many others that are beginning to focus on simple configuration for retail applications. So, there are many that you should review and many that would never compete in the same market space. Let us help you focus on which applications might serve you best.

Please remember, this is an immature market although some companies have been around since the mid 1980's and it is ever-changing with new entries every year. Many companies claim to be unique and they have terminology to match; unique. With the exception of the ERP suppliers, the configurator suppliers are typically not larger than \$10 - 20 million in annual sales revenue and most of that revenue [turnover] is implementation consulting services not software sales. There are exceptions to that. Many have been in business for 20 to 30 years and are very successful in their niche. eSpline can help you find and assess these companies.

How to make a good choice?

Making a "right choice" is yet another issue. Getting through your own company politics, setting up and managing a selection team and dealing with the personal favorites of management and the selection team members can be nightmarish.



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