

How Did Affirmed Networks Reduce ECO Cycles by 90%?



ABOUT THE COMPANY

Affirmed Networks offers multiple solutions that bring unique capabilities to mobile operators. The benefits of these products include true voice grade reliability, traffic analysis, policy enforcement for every flow, traversing the network, and application of the right charging plan—all while optimizing scarce radio resources. Affirmed Networks enables service and application processing at the edge of the network and ties the subscriber with content management functions in a contextually aware manner. The company's products also enable the evolution to rich communication and voice services.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

When Ron Garron first joined the company, he was surprised to discover that Affirmed Networks did not have a product lifecycle management (PLM) solution in place. This forced the VP of Finance to manage the company's product information, bill of materials (BOM), and associated price lists with spreadsheets. This approach

AT A GLANCE

Mission

To transform the future of the mobile industry

Business Challenges

- Reduce frustrating versioning issues
- Decrease costly shipping delays
- Eliminate inefficient processes between siloed systems

Key Benefits

- Streamlined ECO processes
- Accelerated sales support response times
- Reduced engineering change approval cycles by 90%
- Streamlined integration between PLM and ERP systems



led to version-control issues, quality issues, and shipping delays.

“As you can imagine, reliance on spreadsheets caused us a lot of angst because there was information stored in multiple places,” said Garron. “Our product record wasn’t always up to date, so we were getting incorrect quotes for things that were no longer supported—with codes that didn’t exist.”

Complicating matters further were the company’s paper-based engineering change order (ECO) procedures which reduced the visibility necessary for the manufacturing and engineering teams to share accurate product information. That caused versioning issues and brought processes to a halt. “Because we were moving a million miles an hour, we would have multiple versions of the price list,” said Garron. “So, it was really tough to know if you had the latest and greatest version.”

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—Ron Garron, Technical Engineer,
Affirmed Networks

THE SOLUTION

Garron realized that his company needed a modern PLM platform that could scale to meet his BOM management needs. However, he discovered that the traditional on-premises solutions were too costly and frustrating to manage. “We didn’t like working with on-premise solutions,” said Garron. “With a small team, we did not want to deal with the painful IT management issues and need to hire IT resources and business administration people just to manage the system.. We wanted something easy.”

For Garron, Arena eliminated the need for lengthy, expensive IT consulting necessary for on-premises implementations, including server sizing, procurement, and installation. This provided Affirmed Networks’ manufacturing engineering teams with a single cloud-based solution that facilitated synchronization across the entire supply chain. Arena PLM automated change management, controlled access to the correct versions of the product record, improved visibility into all design changes, and eliminated versioning issues.

“Before Arena, our manufacturing processes were very siloed,” admitted Garron. “Now, our marketing, finance, sales, order management, and purchasing



teams are all on the same page. Everybody knows what is going on." Garron was also tasked with implementing Arena PLM and their enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. Arena provided a solid integration to their ERP solution.

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—Ron Garron, Technical Engineer,
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KEY BENEFITS

Affirmed's teams were able to slash ECO review and approval cycles by 90% and significantly reduce the number of IT resources needed to support the implementation and maintenance of Arena's Cloud PLM solution. Furthermore, Garron shared that, "While attending a sales conference, I received an urgent message to release a product immediately so our team could provide a customer quote. With Arena, I was able to quickly create, submit, and release the ECO, remotely, and pass the product information to our ERP system to facilitate the delivery of the customer quote."

Affirmed Networks has been able to reduce product error delays. Many of the problems associated with spreadsheets and their past manual processes have disappeared. "We've seen dramatic improvement in our order accuracy," said Garron. "Arena PLM has provided a remarkable change for us and we are striving to find new ways to use it to make us more efficient."