CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

How Did Affirmed Networks Reduce ECO Cycles by 90%?
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.

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 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. This caused versioning issues that 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 the company needed a modern PLM platform that could scale to meet his BOM management needs. However, he felt 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 it. We wanted something easy.”

For Garron, Arena removed the need for lengthy, expensive IT consulting necessary for on-premises implementations, including server sizing, procurement, and installation.

We 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 PLM and ERP systems. Arena provided a tighter integration between the enterprise resource planning (ERP) and PLM systems than prior on-premises solutions.

KEY BENEFITS

With Arena, 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, “Our team attended a sales conference and I received an urgent message to release a product fast so the team could provide a customer quote. From the time I got the email, I was able to quickly create and release the ECO in Arena and pass to our ERP system to facilitate the delivery of the customer quote immediately. Without Arena, we would have never been able to do that.”

Arena has enabled Affirmed Networks to reduce product error delays dramatically, and many of the problems associated with spreadsheets and more manual processes have disappeared. “We’ve seen dramatic improvement in our order accuracy,” said Garron. “Arena has provided a remarkable change for us and every day we are trying to find new ways to use it to make us more efficient.”

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