



Case Study

High Tech – Telecommunications





Company

Affirmed Networks

Location

Acton, Massachusetts

Industry

High Tech

Business Challenges

- Reduce frustrating versioning issues
- Decrease costly shipping delays
- Eliminate inefficient processes between silo'd systems

Solutions

Arena PLM BOMControl

Business Benefits

- Tightened integration between PLM and ERP systems
- Streamlined ECO processes
- Accelerated sales support response times

ROI Results

- Reduced engineering cycles by 90%
- Eliminated need for costly five-person IT management team
- Boosted sales enablement processes

How Did Affirmed Networks Reduce ECO Cycles by 90%?

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

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 technical engineer Ron Garron joined the company in 2011, he was surprised to discover Affirmed Networks did not have a product lifecycle management (PLM) solution in place; the company's VP of Finance was forced into the ad hoc role of managing the company's bill of material (BOM) and price lists with outdated spreadsheets. Unfortunately, this led to versioning issues, churn and shipping delays.

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

Complicating matters further was the company's paper-based engineering change orders (ECO) procedures which prevented the visibility necessary for his 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, greatest version."



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— Ron Garron, Technical Engineer, Affirmed Networks

Garron realized he needed a modern product lifecycle management (PLM) solution that could scale to meet his BOM needs; however, he felt on-premise solutions were too costly and frustrating to manage. "We just hated 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 PLM BOMControl solution removed the need for lengthy, expensive IT consulting necessary for on-premise implementations, including server sizing, procurement and installation.

“We’ve seen dramatic improvement in our order accuracy. Arena has been a remarkable change for us and every day we are trying to find new ways to use the tool to make us more efficient.”

— Ron Garron, Technical Engineer, Affirmed Networks

ARENA SOLUTIONS



Arena PLM provided manufacturing engineering teams with a centralized cloud-based solution that facilitated synchronization across his supply chain. Automated change features, controlled access to the correct versions of the product record, visibility into all design and engineering change orders, reduced product design confusion and versioning issues.

“Before Arena, our manufacturing processes were very silo’d,” admitted Garron. “Now my 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 in tandem. Arena provided him with a tighter integration between his ERP and PLM systems than what he previously experienced with an on-premise solution. “The process integration between Arena and the ERP was very smooth and quick,” said Garron. Having these solutions in the cloud further enhanced interoperability.

BUSINESS RESULTS

According to Garron, the two big ROI metrics Arena delivered were reducing ECO cycles by 90% and eliminating the need for a five-person IT management team which would have been required with an on-premise solution.

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In addition to providing hard ROI metrics to point to the benefits of PLM, Garron offered this compelling sales anecdote: “Recently, we had a team at a sales conference, and I got a message that we needed a product pushed through right away and needed a quote,” said Garron. “From the time I got the email, I created an ECO and pushed it through our ERP system to get the customer the quote almost instantaneously. Without Arena PLM’s BOMControl, we would have never been able to do that.”

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

Find out how Arena can help you achieve success and take your company from chaos to calm. Sign up for a demo at www.arenasolutions.com/plm-demo