



Goal:

Integrate a product configurator that will reduce the design process and cut back on unit costs.

Challenge:

With its GASGUARD product line offering an extremely large menu of options, Air Products and Chemicals needed a system that could handle complex product configuration.

Solution:

Cincom Acquire™

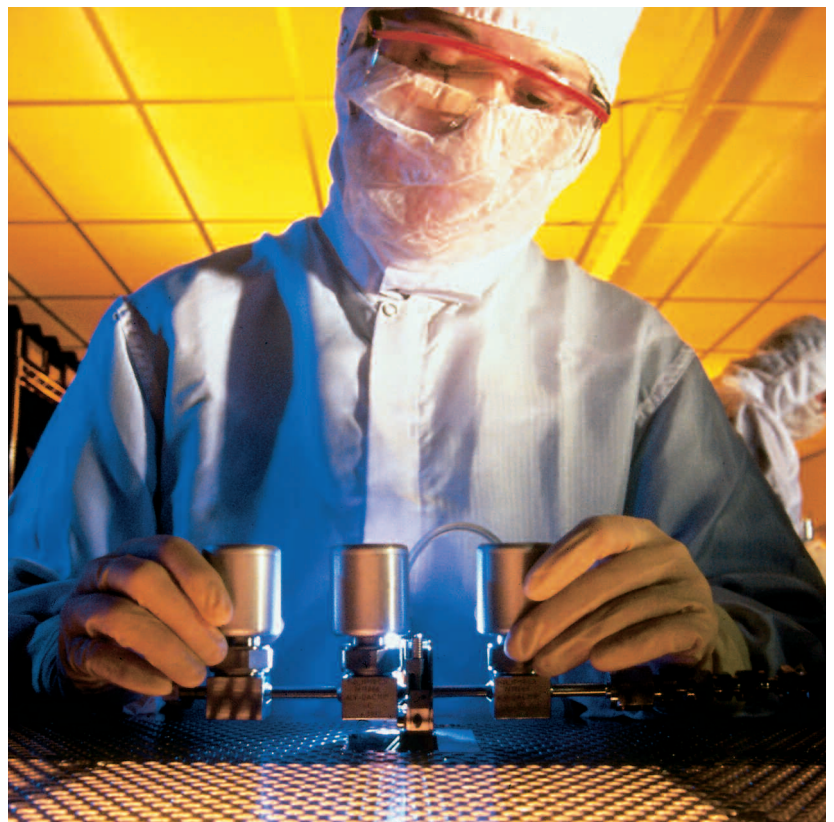
- Guided Selling and Product Configurator

Key Results:

- Unit costs reduced by 28%
- Average lead time reduced, from 14 weeks to less than 6 weeks
- Removed 2 weeks from the design process
- Reduction in configuration errors resulting in higher product quality levels

Profile in Success: **Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.**

2 week reduction in the design process and unit costs down 28%!



Situation

The Semiconductor Equipment Manufacturing Center (SEMC) at Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. successfully front-ends its flow engineering and manufacturing processes with the Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator. Air Products implemented this technology to manage sales order entry, engineering design and manufacturing information for the GASGUARD product line under the company's electronics gas division. More than half of Air Product's products are classified as "mass customised" and flow seamlessly from sales through delivery.

Air Products, headquartered in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley, is an international supplier of industrial gases and related equipment and specialty and intermediate chemicals. This Fortune 500 company employs more than 22,000 people in over 40 countries. Since implementing the Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator, one of the many improvements realised by Air Products

has been removing two weeks from the design process for its mass-customised systems. But, these results didn't happen overnight, and not without a total team effort.

Organisational Transformation and Teamwork

Air Products knew that the implementation of mass customisation and Product Configuration technologies would require an organisational transformation and a significant change in the work process, as well as redefining and simplifying product offerings using a "clean sheet" or value-engineering approach. Value engineering deals with achieving the base design and options of products and an analysis of their comparative costs. It also defines the functional needs of components and subsystems that make up the product. They also knew that changing toward a value-engineered and simplified product would require well-defined goals and objectives.

Flexibility was a critical factor for the GASGUARD product line since the sales force would not accept any new approach having only a few options. In reality, the menu of choices had to be extremely large for the GASGUARD product line so that real-time system designs could be generated.

"Our Product Configurator had to blanket several other database and application tools to accurately and consistently scope customer equipment orders. The ability to interface our Product Configurator to these tools ensures that this foundation of underlying applications and knowledge continues to play a key role in the specification and design of our equipment. These existing resources are leveraged and need not be re-invented."

– John Potylycki, Senior Software Designer, Semiconductor Equipment Manufacturing Center, Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.

Bottom-Line Results

The implementation of the Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator has had a positive impact on product cost, speed to market and product quality.

Air Products has also found that Cincom's technology is not only a tool for sales force automation, it is also an effective tool for design engineering and manufacturing. Sales force automation, also referred to as "front-end" work processes, provides customer equipment scope and order-entry information, customer profiles, sales estimates and proposal documents. Design engineering and manufacturing tasks, referred to as "back-end" work processes, include creation and transfer of technical information such as design drawings, bills of materials and routing.

Potylycki would share with those considering a product configurator implementation, "Successful implementation has significantly improved both the completeness and accuracy of our equipment scope. It has also eliminated most of the specification follow-up required by our front-office engineering and design groups when preparing a customer equipment order for manufacturing."

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