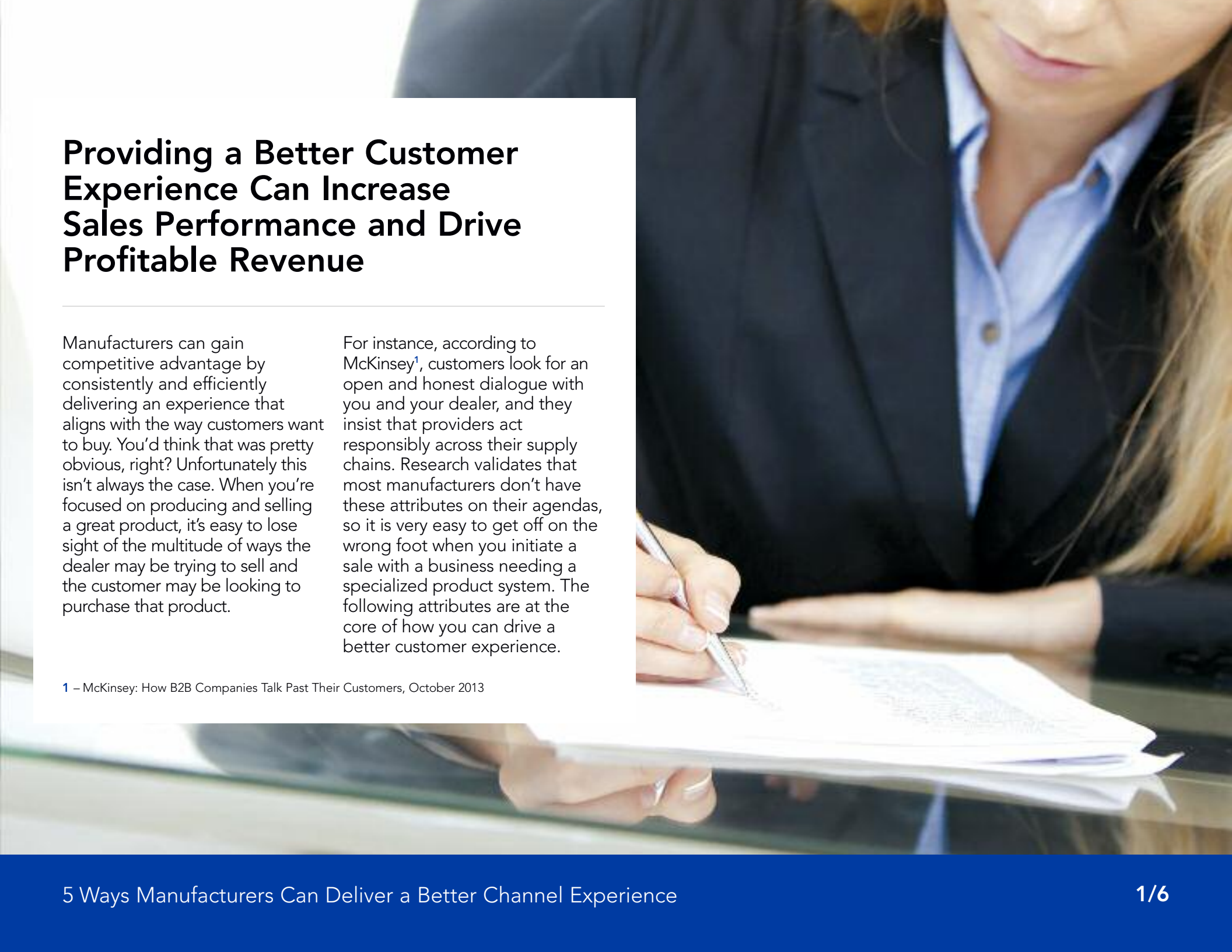




5 Ways

Manufacturers Can Deliver a Better Channel Experience

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a light blue button-down shirt, is sitting at a desk. She is holding a silver pen and writing on a white document. The background is slightly blurred, showing a modern office setting.

Providing a Better Customer Experience Can Increase Sales Performance and Drive Profitable Revenue

Manufacturers can gain competitive advantage by consistently and efficiently delivering an experience that aligns with the way customers want to buy. You'd think that was pretty obvious, right? Unfortunately this isn't always the case. When you're focused on producing and selling a great product, it's easy to lose sight of the multitude of ways the dealer may be trying to sell and the customer may be looking to purchase that product.

For instance, according to McKinsey¹, customers look for an open and honest dialogue with you and your dealer, and they insist that providers act responsibly across their supply chains. Research validates that most manufacturers don't have these attributes on their agendas, so it is very easy to get off on the wrong foot when you initiate a sale with a business needing a specialized product system. The following attributes are at the core of how you can drive a better customer experience.

¹ – McKinsey: How B2B Companies Talk Past Their Customers, October 2013



Selecting the right configure-price-quote platform goes a long way toward ensuring that you're easier to do business with than your competitors. The capabilities customers expect can serve as a guide when deciding which CPQ vendor is right for you.

You run an incredibly complex business, providing customers with highly specialized products. The products and solutions that roll out from your facilities are configured from thousands or tens of thousands of parts and a supply chain that likely stretches half way around the world.

But without a powerful quoting system, it may be taking too long to give customers a reliable quote

Configuring the right customized product for your customer, pricing all of the components and labor and then quoting a cost to your prospect are all processes that are at the heart of your ability to deliver a quality product.

If it takes too long to execute these steps, a more agile competitor could already have the deal wrapped up. That's where a great quoting system, along with an awesome customer experience, comes into play.



5 Ways You Can Match Up with Customer Expectations to Deliver a Better Channel Experience

1. Provide a portal for dealers to access accurate, up-to-date information when they are quoting—no matter where the customer is.



Allied Specialty Vehicles, the largest manufacturer of emergency vehicles and small buses in North America, makes it easier for dealers to access up-to-date product information when ordering their emergency vehicles from anywhere in the world. Their multi-channel sales portal easily addresses their mix of dealers and direct sales structure and provides multi-lingual capabilities as well.

2. Make it easy for dealers to customize and select the right product for customers' needs—including speaking their language and showing prices in their currency.



Wabash, one of the world's leading manufacturers of semi-truck trailers and commercial trucking equipment, ensures that their dealers can place orders in their own language, and customers can pay with familiar currency. These and other multinational enterprise capabilities provide a much better experience for their global channels.

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3. **Deliver fast quotes, even for highly engineered components, and ensure a short order-to-delivery lead time—with no errors.**

FASSI

Fassi produces 10,000 custom-built cranes per year from over 30,000 possible configurations. An advanced configurator allows their dealers to ensure 100 percent order accuracy and dramatically decrease the time needed to launch an order into production.

4. **Enable your dealers to feed customer specifications directly into an ERP system to initiate production.**

**PM
GROUP**

The **PM Group** manufactures truck-mounted hydraulic knuckle boom cranes. They are able to manage their complicated and highly variable product rules and BOMs using a configurator, in order to jump-start production.

5. **Go beyond specifications and include recommendations based on customer preferences.**

SIEMENS

Siemens has established over 100 years of market leadership in the electric motor industry through fast, efficient response to customer demand. All of their dealers are able to make recommendations, as well as quickly and confidently configure, price and quote faster than their competition.

When products are highly customized, the customer looks for ways to mitigate risk and ensure that they'll get exactly what they ordered.

The best manufacturers treat the quoting process as a means to build trust, not just sell a product. As a result, good configure-price-quote systems allow your sales channels to spend more time with customers, face to face, understanding their businesses and earning their trust. This goes double for manufacturers that produce highly engineered products. The more complicated the product, the higher the trust level that is needed.

Customers want the exact product they need at a reasonable price when they want it—so they can get a rapid return from their investments. And they want all of this in real time, through any channel and across any device. How does your customer experience stack up?

The type of experience you provide to your customers is broadcast in every quote, proposal and order taken and fulfilled. What do yours say about your company?



About Cincom

Manufacturers of highly engineered equipment face unique challenges, including strict compliance and quality-control issues, lengthy and complex supply chains, daunting project cost estimation requirements and aggressive delivery schedules. Cincom has deep industry and product expertise that reflects this understanding. We have been helping manufacturers win more business, operate efficiently and deliver as promised for five decades.

For more information on Cincom CPQ, contact us at info@cincom.com or visit our website at www.cincom.com/cpq.



Greg Mills has been in the industry for well over 30 years as a consultant and managing director of firms such as Courtaulds Australasia, among others. He is currently responsible for the Australian and New Zealand operations for Cincom.



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