

Integrated Fabric Resource

Made2Manage[®] ERP



Consona Configurator Cuts Integrated Fabric Resource Quote Leadtime

Custom Packaging Manufacturer's Sales Team Now Producing Quotes in 5-10 Minutes

Fast Quotes Critical for Success

Integrated Fabric Resource (IFR) specializes in designing and manufacturing custom fabric pouch assemblies and tote liners for automotive in-process and returnable material handling systems. IFR products are used in packaging a broad range of manufactured parts with delicate or special handling requirements for automotive and truck interiors and exteriors, appliances, electronics and other industries.

Because nearly every order is built to customer specifications and quotes are often needed quickly, efficient and accurate quoting software was of utmost importance to IFR. Previously, IFR was preparing quotes using spreadsheets and a computer aided design system, a process that required three to four people and took 24 to 36 hours.

IFR implemented the Consona Configurator to automate the quoting process. Sales people now enter the specifications for the quote into a custom form in the Consona Configurator and the software package generates a bill of materials and manufacturing plan, determines the cost, and feeds the information into a SolidWorks CAD system design table, which in turn generates a solid model and drawings to accompany the quote. A sales representative can now produce a quote in 5 to 10 minutes.

Previous Quoting Process Quite Complex

In the past, IFR's quoting process was complex and required input from the sales,

engineering, manufacturing and purchasing departments. The sales representative would typically provide specifications, such as the surface to be protected, to the design engineer. The design engineer would generate the design and bill of materials and provide these to purchasing and manufacturing engineering. Purchasing would then calculate the cost of the materials and manufacturing engineering would determine the cost of assembly. All of this information would then be provided back to the salesperson, who would write the cover letter and assemble the quote.

The actual work required to produce a quote with the previous method ranged from two to three hours. But the actual elapsed time was considerably longer because people were generally busy and could not start work on their part of the quote until some time after they received the information. "Customers typically look at packaging as just one piece of the puzzle," said Colton Westrate, product and process development specialist for IFR. "They often call us shortly before they are ready to start production. We recognized that we could substantially improve our competitive position if we could generate faster quotes."

Manual Methods Used to Manage Manufacturing

IFR also previously used manual methods to manage its manufacturing operations. Spreadsheets were used to track work orders and develop schedules, and an accounting system was used for financial reporting.



Return on Investment at a Glance:

The implementation of Made2Manage ERP and the Consona Configurator has helped Integrated Fabric Resource, a leading supplier of custom packaging solutions to the automotive industry, improve its competitive position by streamlining the quoting process. Specifically, IFR has:

- Reduced the time required to generate a quote from 24-36 hours to 5-10 minutes.
- Reduced the number of people required to produce a quote from four to one.
- Saved countless hours converting quotes to orders due to ERP integration.

"We have become more competitive, which has helped us succeed."

— **Cal Kortman**, Executive Vice President of Quality, IFR

Manufacturing work orders consisted of paper documents and traveled with the job. One problem with this approach was that information frequently needed to be entered into multiple systems. Information in one system sometimes contradicted another system. Accurately determining the status of a job often required tracking down multiple people to see what they knew.

The first improvement made by IFR was to implement Made2Manage® ERP, a Consona ERP software solution that integrates every aspect of midrange manufacturing, including sales and distribution, engineering, advanced planning and scheduling, materials management, production, quality management, finance and human resources. Information is entered once and only once and from that point is available, through data flow, to other departments or for reporting purposes. For example, purchasing information flows into receiving which flows into accounts payable, substantially limiting data entry time, reducing data-entry errors and improving the timeliness of reporting.

Configurator Streamlines Quoting Process

IFR expanded their ERP implementation by using the Consona Configurator to automate the quoting process. The configurator tool provides the ability to create rules, formulas and custom input screens to simplify the configuration entry process. Westrate setup the configurator to generate quotes for IFR Dividers, a new product line. It prompts the sales people for the data needed to produce the quote, such as the size of the part and the surface finish that needs to be protected.

Westrate also established rules that select materials and determine the size of the fabric packaging system based on these inputs. Then, he created tables to calculate the cost of the materials and the cost of the processes used to make the packaging system. He worked with a consultant to create an interface between the configurator and SolidWorks that automatically populates SolidWorks design tables with the information needed to fully define the product. Once these fields are populated, the interface prompts SolidWorks to generate a solid model of the product, as well as all the necessary manufacturing documentation.

The configurator then prints out the complete proposal, including cover letter, pricing,

detailed drawings and bill of materials. In less than 10 minutes, the proposal is on its way to the customer. The Consona Configurator also allows the engineering, purchasing and manufacturing staff to work on more proactive tasks.

Time Savings From ERP Integration

When the order comes through, additional time is saved because all the data is already in the ERP system. The only action that needs to be taken once an order is confirmed is to convert the quote to a sales order and enter the quantity and delivery schedule. All the data from the quote then automatically flows into the ERP system. As a result, Made2Manage ERP immediately explodes the bill of materials and determines exactly what is needed to complete the order. It checks these requirements against the current inventory and determines what items need to be purchased. It combines the company's complete requirements into a purchasing queue that maximizes quantity discounts.

When the job is ready for assembly, the information is provided electronically to the manufacturing team using M2M Shop Floor Manager, a manufacturing execution system that eliminates the need for paperwork in communicating shop schedules, manufacturing instructions, and material lists. IFR's shop personnel log into the system to receive work orders and record their progress, freeing up considerable time for the supervisors to spend on more proactive activities. In addition, supervisors and managers have the ability to obtain more current data on job status.

IFR has also seen considerable time savings on the financial accounting side of their business as manufacturing, purchasing, receiving and other data now flows directly into accounting without the need for summary entries. Managers now have the ability to drilldown from financial reports to see underlying details, such as materials purchases and labor expenses for individual orders.

"Our move to Made2Manage and the Consona Configurator has helped us generate more accurate and timely information that leads to better decisions, while also saving data entry and communications time," added Cal Kortman, IFR's executive VP of quality. *"As a result, we have become more competitive, which has helped us succeed."*

CASE STUDY

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Executive VP of Quality, IFR



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