



iC ConfiguratorTM *Solutions*

*Managing Choice,
Managing Change*

CINCOM



iC™ Configurator Solutions – Managing Choice, Managing Change

The business landscape continues to evolve rapidly – as companies in all sectors apply increasingly sophisticated e-business models to create and sustain new heights of customer choice, service levels, and satisfaction.

Although the main emphasis has been on e-business, most organizations are now doing business through a variety of channels – direct, indirect, and through call centers as well as the internet. Customers are increasingly exploiting this variety and access flexibility. An inquiry may be initiated over the web, further information may be sought from a call center, and finally an order is placed with a reseller.

In addition to the marketplace, product and channel diversity, there is an increasing need to offer more complex pricing, financial, and regulatory options – if only to support the needs of differing geographic regions.

The continual pace of change brings a final twist – the need to continually extend and update information and make it available across the extended enterprise.

As you are being asked to manage this massive expansion of information and channels, your customers and partners are expecting relationships to be increasingly flexible and personal. From initial phone calls through the presentation of product and pricing information to sales proposals and other documentation, we are in the era of personalization, customization, and configuration.

Responding to the Challenges

As these pressures continue to build, traditional methods of information deployment become unsuitable or even unusable. The traditional paper catalog and price list are unwieldy, quickly outdated, and expensive to produce. As query levels rise and your product specialists come under growing pressure to deliver new and updated products, “chasing the expert” becomes increasingly impractical. Channels outside your own operation may demand a different style or level of support from your in-house teams. Publishing even basic information on the internet and keeping it consistent with other channels presents a major challenge.

How does an organization cope with such an information explosion?

How do you capture and maintain information across your business on an increasingly dynamic basis and make it available to a diverse range of users?

Most importantly, how can you deliver this knowledge to your own organization, resellers, and customers in a clear, uncomplicated way that guides any user simply and quickly to the information they need?

Cincom's *iC* Configuration Solutions provide the tools for companies to capture product, service, and business knowledge — making it easier to do business, increase profitability, and increase sales effectiveness.

PRICING

OPTIONS

GEOGRAPHY



Sales Configuration

Sales configuration is an area that delivers significant impact. Your sales channels must be able to quickly translate a customer requirement into the correct product offering. How do you ensure that their choice of product, options, and services meets their needs? And from your perspective, how do you ensure that the product choice is current, correctly priced, entirely viable, and *profitable*? If it is a manufactured product, can it actually be built as specified? If regulated, can you ensure that the product and your sales process conform in all aspects?

A sales configurator needs to deliver knowledge in a way that is easy to use by non-specialists.

A key differentiator of sales configurators is their ability to capture product knowledge and the business logic that will determine if elements of the product offering are viable under particular circumstances. The configurator makes this knowledge readily and easily available wherever it is needed. As your products evolve, upgrades must be made smoothly and regularly so that new products can be introduced and competitive pricing and creative financing can be maintained. All of this must be done while complying with regulatory requirements and operating profitably.

Configuration Across the Business

iC Solutions is able to manage configurations across the business – from simple products to complex products that incorporate the broadest “whole product” information. In addition to configuring products, *iC Solutions* can configure prices, complex financing deals, production or test operations, and physical layouts. Document configuration can deliver major improvements in ease-of-use, effectiveness, and accuracy – from simple quotations through sales proposals and complex project bids to personalized customer documentation.

The comprehensive variety of features in *iC Solutions* includes calculated product attributes and the ability to optimize configurations for different needs such as highest performance, lowest cost, or physical layout. Data is also easily interchanged with other applications.

Working on the User's Terms

Users must be able to develop configurations that suit a specific requirement, and access the knowledge base quickly and easily whenever and wherever they need it – in the office, on the road, on the phone, or on the internet. The configurator must work according to the users' specific terms, reflecting their language and specific needs. Do not expect the user to have prior understanding of your company's products, technology, or terminology.



CHANNELS

iC Solutions will configure

- Products
- Services
- Project activities
- Production routings
- Pricing
- Financial terms
- Documentation
 - Manuals
 - Proposals
 - Contracts
- Physical layouts

User orientation is an absolute prerequisite for customers who are seeking information or selecting products. It also gives you a huge competitive advantage with your resellers and partners. Your company will be easier to do business with, you will deliver added value, reduce demand on resources, and errors and queries will be minimized or even eliminated.

For your salespeople in the field, office, or call center, maintaining a customer perspective makes it easier to engage the customer in the selling process. It enables your salespeople and agents to be productive faster, while dramatically reducing training costs on new products or upgrades, lessening the need for product specialization, and facilitating cross-selling. Response times can be slashed and errors drastically reduced as salespeople always have the latest information and are guided through the configuration process. They no longer need to go “offline” to consult product experts, perform calculations, or review catalogs or documentation.

Capturing and Maintaining Knowledge

Ease-of-use is essential; however, so is an accurate and up-to-date knowledge base of information. Configurators vary greatly in the ease in which knowledge is captured and maintained.

Ownership of the knowledge model must remain with your own knowledge experts. If the development and maintenance of the knowledge base requires technical skills (sometimes only available from the supplier) or if the maintenance is cumbersome and resource-intensive, it will be expensive and difficult to update and your knowledge base will never be up-to-date.

iC Solutions provides advanced knowledge-management techniques and allows different areas of the knowledge base to be maintained by different business areas of expertise. Your knowledge base can contain a wide variety of information.

Configuration Dialogues

To ensure that interactions are attractive and easy to follow, it is important that user dialogues are easy to build and can make use of a variety of presentation techniques. Since *iC Solutions* employs an advanced architecture which separates data, business rules, and presentation layers, you do not need extensive technical knowledge. You can develop differing dialogue styles to suit various applications and users.


iC Solutions also incorporates features that make configuration extremely user-friendly, even for complex applications. Dialogues can be sequential, but will also allow the user to navigate the configuration in an extremely flexible manner. This allows users to develop configurations in different ways to match varying needs or levels of expertise or experience.

BENEFITS

- Develop configurations faster
- Eliminate the need to “chase the expert”
- Eliminate rework on incorrect orders
- Manage simple to complex configurations
- Deploy to in-house, remote, mobile, or web users
- Increase effectiveness at the point of sale
- Deploy a single knowledge base
- Reduce training time
- Ensure consistent, accurate configurations across the business
- Deliver competitive advantage to resellers
- Increase customers' satisfaction levels
- Develop configurations in the users' terminology
- Establish a key foundation for mass customization
- Experience rapid implementation and deployment
- Facilitate cross-selling
- Eliminate paper catalogues and price lists
- Configure products, services, prices, and financing options
- Change product variety from an issue to a competitive advantage
- Experience fast, flexible knowledge capture
- Discover that knowledge maintenance doesn't require technical specialists



FINANCING



As a configuration progresses, dialogs continually interact with the user showing which options are available based on previous choices. These constraints can be “grayed out” or removed; or you can even allow users to select “invalid” options and ask *iC Solutions* to suggest corrections to your previous choices.

To facilitate rapid development and deployment, *iC Solutions* provides a default dialog capability which enables business rules to be integrated and used immediately.

Output and Integration

Once a configuration has been developed, *iC Solutions* offers a wide variety of options to report or distribute configuration information. Configurations may be output as text or HTML reports or exported to any OLE-compliant application. Information can be passed to back-office systems, such as order-processing systems, ERP, and manufacturing systems.

Configuration details are automatically stored for future use, making it easy to revise configurations, maintain standard “templates,” or recall previous configurations.

iC Solutions provides configuration justification, which can be helpful in a number of ways but particularly where such justification is required for regulatory compliance.

Information interchange with associated business areas is simple and secure using the data management capabilities of *iC Solutions*.

Deployment

iC Solutions uses the latest Component Object technology. This means that the *iC Configurator* can be deployed in a number of different ways. *iC Configurator* is available as a stand-alone product or as a component of Cincom’s *iC Solutions* – which integrates into the ways you do business: On the Road, On the Phone, or On the Web.

Because of its Component Object technology, *iC Configurator* may be deployed as an “engine” inside your own custom-built applications. It can be deployed as part of a central enterprise system or as a component of any internet, intranet, or extranet application. The same capabilities can be embedded into call center applications. *iC Configurator* can also be used to build mobile configurator applications. With the *iC Connect* module, you can synchronize mobile applications with your central knowledge base.

No matter how you deploy *iC Configurator*, you will be able to benefit from a consistent set of business logic and expert knowledge, wherever and however you do business.

iC Solutions ... market-leading configuration ... On the Road, On the Phone, On the Web.

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