VISTECH

Customer Stories

A Case Study in Replacing Outdated CPQ Software

A Manufacturer Optimizes Their Sales Process by Reducing Errors and Saving Time

Background

A multinational manufacturing firm wanted to replace its outdated CPQ implementation. CPQ software is rapidly revolutionizing sales processes across industries. By utilizing advanced software to generate precise quotes for complex and configurable products, CPQ elevates the sales process to new heights. The primary objective of implementing a CPQ system is to create an accurate and efficient sales process that minimizes errors and saves time.

The manufacturer's existing system was implemented with technology that was over 20 years old and mainly relied on undocumented processes established decades ago. The integration of the system was chaotic, with RFQs (Requests for Quotes) coming in through faxes, phone calls, and proprietary EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) feeds. The Quote process was littered with manual intervention and paper records. Orders were submitted to the ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system by posting XML (Extensible Markup Language) to an unsecured (HTTP) web page. Distributors had to create their own screen scraping tools to collect order status. Despite its flaws, the system was functional, and users were not unhappy with its performance.

About Us

At VISTECH, our goal is to be all about you. We understand the technology, but that is not as important as understanding you and your business. We will deliver technology solutions that are the best suited for you.

Challenges

One of the biggest challenges with replacing the outdated CPQ system was defining requirements. This was mainly due to the lack of documentation on the existing system and supporting processes.

The outdated system was over 20 years old and developed using now unsupported technology, with numerous enhancements added over the years and without any common design or standards in place. These "enhanced" systems are difficult to reverse engineer, due to the multiple layers of code implementing specific requirements. This results in software that only works for a specific business process and cannot be easily enhanced.

The business domain experts had a good understanding of how the system worked but were unsure of why. For the new implementation, it would therefore become crucial to uncover the why, avoiding sole focus on the how. Simply mirroring the outdated system would not result in an efficient and extensible replacement.

In addition to replacing the outdated system, the manufacturer was interested in leveraging the data from the new system to generate valuable business intelligence for the organization. Analyzing the data would deliver useful information on product preferences, purchasing trends, and other metrics that could be fed back to sales, finance, and operations.

Solution

To meet the requirements of the manufacturer, VISTECH implemented its SolSuite RQO (RFQ Quote Order) System with minor customizations. SolSuite RQO takes CPQ to the next level by automating the entire quoting process from beginning to end – RFQ to Quote to Order. RQO integrates seamlessly with sales support and back-office systems using standardized interfaces. This gives the sales teams the tools they need for efficient quoting and operations, as well as a seamless and error-free fulfillment process.

The manufacturer chose to use the complete RQO system. This replaced their unstructured, manual approach with an integrated process that supported their custom requirements. Most of the changes required were configuration changes, such as in the data-driven Quote Approval process that allows for configurable Approval Flags, thresholds, and user roles that can resolve Flags. The Quote components, such as Opening Statements and Terms & Conditions, can be edited using administrative data entry web pages. The quoting system was integrated with a product lead time system and the ERP system for pricing. The ERP system was integrated in real-time for order processing.

The RQO user interface is customizable to support client-specific data collection requirements, with various user roles available. Distributor representatives can submit RFQs, approve Quotes, and enter Orders, while multiple roles are available for the manufacturer's staff to update, approve and deliver Quotes, modify pricing, and control Orders. Much of the RQO functionality is available via APIs, allowing distributor systems access to Order status from their systems.

VISTECH also implemented the SolSuite Data Warehouse to provide unrestricted Business Intelligence (BI) analysis and reporting. All RFQ, Quote, and Order data were made available in an easy-to-query database.

Result

After the six-month replacement project, SolSuite was launched. The company followed a tiered rollout plan, with internal staff being the first to use RQO Quoting. VISTECH integrated RQO with the outdated system, which enabled the automatic population of Quotes into the outdated system's Orders. The manufacturer later rolled out RFQ & Order processing to distributors. After four months, the entire user base was using SolSuite RFQ, and the outdated system was retired.

Since adopting SolSuite, the manufacturer has seen a significant reduction in quoting errors and spends less time transcribing RFQ submissions to Orders. The Data Warehouse is utilized to track product purchase trends, allowing sales to identify parts requested in RFQs that did not proceed to Quotes and Orders. Multiple distributors now update their systems automatically by using the SolSuite RFQ APIs.

Currently, this one RQO implementation supports around 350 RFQs/month, 1200 Quotes/month, and 500 Orders/month. The manufacturer has experienced no performance issues and plans to use more of the RQO headless APIs to enable automated RFQ submissions and more integration with their back-office system. Thanks to VISTECH, the manufacturer has a more efficient sales process, minimizing errors and saving time.