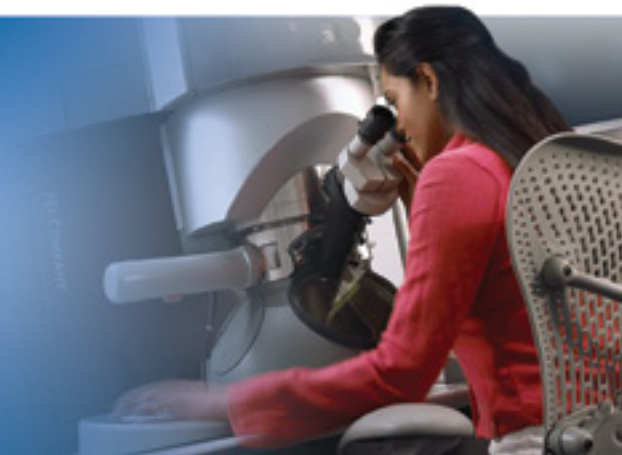


FEI COMPANY

Scientific Instrument Manufacturer Configures Complex Microscopes for Customers On-the-Fly and In the Field



Company
FEI Company
 Hillsboro, OR
www.fei.com

Corporate Details

FEI (Nasdaq:FEIC) is a leading diversified scientific instruments company. It is a premier provider of electron and ion-beam microscopes and tools for nanoscale applications across many industries: industrial and academic materials research, life sciences, semiconductors, data storage, natural resources and more. With a 60-year history of technological innovation and leadership, FEI has set the performance standard in transmission electron microscopes (TEM), scanning electron microscopes (SEM) and DualBeams™, which combine a SEM with a focused ion beam (FIB). FEI's imaging systems provide 3D characterization, analysis and modification/prototyping with resolutions down to the sub-Ångström (one-tenth of a nanometer) level.

With approximately 1800 employees and sales and service operations in more than 50 countries around the world, FEI is a leading diversified scientific instruments company.

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Challenge

FEI is a leader in a field that is extremely price and market conscious. In an effort to streamline business both internally and externally, FEI selected Microsoft Dynamics CRM to improve sales and customer service operations. To help realize the benefits of the new CRM solution, FEI needed an integrated product configurator to:

- Control quote and order configurations of products and services precisely
- Support discount approvals and non-standard requests
- Provide accurate pricing in multiple currencies
- Consolidate the needs of product administrators operating in different time zones
- Create a "corporate memory" of product configurations

FEI had an existing quote and order system but the process had limitations, including:

- The use of about 20 different software tools and Excel spreadsheets
- Slow, cumbersome and difficult to maintain and lacking integration to CRM

"FEI runs an international business with various factories around the globe. We needed a highly flexible, scalable configurator that would help streamline our financial management and allow us to control our configurations very precisely. Moreover, we wanted a tool that would easily support the use of discount approvals as well as the processing of non-standard requests", says Guido van Mier, Configuration Manager for FEI Worldwide.

Solution

After investigating several product configurator packages, FEI selected Experlogix for its integration to Dynamics CRM and its scalable architecture. "We evaluated other solutions but in the end there was no decision; Experlogix was the logical choice for us as it is such a versatile tool," says van Mier. "Experlogix could handle all that we initially required and more. Just recently we incorporated logic that handles installation, warranty, additional warranty, and freight and duty. None of the other tools we considered came even close to the power of Experlogix."

"One additional very important consideration for choosing Experlogix was for its capabilities of managing our administrative pains," continues van Mier. "Multiple administrators operating in various time zones were putting quite a bit of stress on the system. Now our administrative departments work seamlessly around the world."

Experlogix helps FEI consolidate product and service options, rules and pricing into a single intelligent system, eliminating the need for paper catalogs and cumbersome-to-maintain spreadsheets. The configurator ensures the entire proposal or order is 100 percent accurate, guaranteeing a seamless quote-to-order process and higher customer satisfaction.

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Benefits

- Ensures microscopes can be manufactured as ordered
- Reduces engineering and manufacturing rework for current orders
- Enables offline quote configuration
- Handles multi-currency quotes
- Streamlines discount approval processes
- Assists with manufacturing plan production
- Dynamics CRM integration

Result

FEI's customers across a range of scientific industries require microscopes to fit their specific needs. An instrument used in a biology lab will include particular cameras and pieces of equipment while an instrument used for semi-conductor fabrication will include others. FEI's sales reps no longer quote and configure each instrument by consulting a spreadsheet and a diagram tree to match up parts that can and cannot co-exist on the same instrument. All this information is now accessible via the Experlogix Configurator from Dynamics CRM. They also get immediate feedback if an individual part is compatible with the overall microscope as planned. As a result, FEI has dramatically reduced quote times for even its most complex instruments and is certain that all quotes contain accurate configurations.

"Experlogix enables FEI to produce orders in just a fraction of the time previously required. We no longer have to deal with complex systems involving multiple software tools and hordes of Excel spreadsheets," says van Mier.

FEI also appreciates the tight integration with Dynamics CRM. According to van Mier "Experlogix works harmoniously with Dynamics CRM and the combination of the two is quite powerful. We have tossed our old system overboard and have managed to get rid of at least 20 different programs and Excel sheets on the fly. As the multi-currency functionality is easy to set up in Experlogix, we were able to build a uniform solution that serves our global sales team so we now speak one common language in the company. In fact, we have even started training our agents and distributors to use Experlogix for quoting."

Experlogix enables FEI to control which users have access to which information, supports automation of internal processes such as requests for quoting non-standard products and discount approval workflows. "Simply stated, our business is running much more smoothly than before," says van Mier.



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