



Goals:

- Improve the accuracy of orders to build complex, customized fire trucks
- Eliminate waste from manufacturing system
- Reduce the cost of maintaining the system
- Make it easier for customers to order highly customized trucks

Challenges:

- Little buy-in among departments
- Too much time between order receipt and order release
- Customer difficulty in accurately configuring order for highly customized trucks

Solution: Cincom Acquire®

Key Results:

- Improved forecasting: Visibility at the time of quote rather than at the time of the order
- Reduced manufacturing costs
- Up to a 51% reduction in lead times
- Improved purchasing: less need to expedite parts
- Reduced inventory and improved inventory turns
- Faster response to market demands
- Improved dealer effectiveness
- Seamless integration with legacy systems
- Greater dealer and customer satisfaction
- Order processing time reduced by 41%

Profile in Success: **E-ONE**

Cincom Improves Efficiency at E-ONE

Fire apparatus manufacturer's complex product offering supported by Cincom product configurator



Bob Wormser thought he was retired in 1974. He'd sold his aluminum playset manufacturing company and settled down to live the easy life. But one day, Wormser passed an old fire truck rusting away in a field and thought that if someone made a fire truck out of aluminum, it wouldn't rust. Being an engineer, he went home and built an aluminum fire truck and took it to a trade show. Within a decade, his new company, E-ONE, became the largest manufacturer of fire rescue vehicles in the United States.

Today, E-ONE has more than 23,000 vehicles in operation around the world. They are the industry leader in product innovations, new technologies and exceeding customer expectations—all of which begin with their EzDRAW, EzONE, EzWRITER and EzONE2go product configurators, based on Cincom Acquire.

Complex, Customizable Products

The need for such versatile product configurators was born out of the company's increasingly complex product offerings; E-ONE's emergency vehicles can have up to 14,000 customizable features.

"Every single one of our products is different," says Peter Guile, CEO of E-ONE. "Every fire department decides what its needs are and has specific views on how its truck should be configured. This builds a tremendous amount of complexity into our job."

"In the past," adds Jonathan Plant, E-ONE's configuration manager, "we would have to pore over each order line by line to confirm that all of the components were not just okay by themselves, but also okay in combination."

As a result, E-ONE was challenged with producing accurate quotes and orders requiring significant amounts of resources and cost. Orders were accepted without a clear understanding of the details, and products were being built with incomplete information. E-ONE did not have structured processes for product definition and the release of new features. Dealers could "write in" their interpretation of an order, including instructions to the shop floor. This technique made systemic bill of materials (BOM) determinations next to impossible.

In an effort to correct these issues, E-ONE replaced its manual process with a vended solution. When the vendor stopped supporting that solution, E-ONE tried to grow its own product-configuration solution using in-house resources. They struggled to provide dealers with the tools needed to supply customers with detailed custom specifications.

"The industry overall makes an eight to 10 percent return on sales, and E-ONE was not profitable," Guile says. An exhaustive search for a solution led E-ONE to Cincom. "Our mission to do things more efficiently and take waste out of our system led us to become heavily engaged with Cincom for our sales process product configurator."

"The Cincom technology has really enabled us to shorten the turnaround time for orders."

– Jonathan Plant, Configuration Manager, E-ONE

Cincom's Solution

In 2005, E-ONE began implementation of its EzONE product configurator, based on Cincom Acquire. By the end of 2007, all E-ONE products were released into EzONE, resulting in a marked improvement. Now, instead of an error-prone process that took days, customers can order highly customized fire rescue vehicles in minutes.

Capturing Tribal Knowledge

"Cincom's technology allows us to capture the knowledge of the product as we build it," says Larry Schenavar, E-ONE's IT director. "Our prior configuration product relied a lot on tribal knowledge, which meant our dealers had to be very good fire truck designers. Using the Cincom solution, we capture the knowledge in the product and that allows us to push that knowledge into the dealers' hands, so they don't necessarily need to know every single thing about a fire truck in order to configure it."

Shortening the Sales Process

Using EzONE, a dealer can now create a new quote and have it available to present to his customer in under 20 minutes—a vast improvement, according to Jonathan Plant. "In the past, that was a pretty long and arduous process that would require possibly days of phone calls back and forth between sales and dealer support," Plant says. "Now we've put it all in one place. If a dealer does need support, that's available in EzONE, as well. The Cincom technology has really enabled us to consolidate the process and shorten the turnaround time for orders."

Plant and E-ONE product manager, Joe Hedges, worked together to load the product configurator with the rules and options needed to build E-ONE's fire engines.

Developing Highly Customized Quotes

"With the Cincom technology," Hedges says, "we were able to develop a quoting tool that we could populate with thousands of options and hundreds of rules, allowing the dealer to develop a highly customized quote for a wide variety of products we offer."

Plant adds, "The Cincom technology that we use is an advanced application. There are complex rule structures and lots of information that has to be maintained and run in a timely manner." However, the way that the application is put together makes it easy for non-technical users to learn and get the end result that they need. "The Cincom technology has made all of that much easier for us."

CEO Guile takes a broader view. "The Cincom team helped us deliver what appears to be a sales tool, but really starts with product management," he says. "Which options we offer and how those options stack up all ties into driving our operation—capturing the engineering requirements and delivering them through a sales tool order enables us to be organized and manufacture trucks efficiently."

Working with Cincom

Cincom's professionals worked closely with E-ONE's team in the creation of EzONE. Beginning with the product definition stage, Cincom helped guide the project to successful completion.

Defining the Product

"The critical linchpin to product development is product definition," Schenavar says. "The product needs to be set up with a good foundation of product definition in order to make it successful. The Cincom team helped us with that."

Schenavar says that Cincom advisor Rusty Halm was instrumental in helping the E-ONE team design and define their knowledge environment. "A lot of the things he told us to do—making smaller constraints and things like that—we didn't take his advice. We ended up having to go back and do some of the things he had suggested we do."

Design Advice

Likewise, Cincom product director Jim Wilson gave Schenavar much valuable advice about the design of EzONE. "Jim has a very good knowledge of product definition, design and how to design for configurability. The Cincom team really has their finger on the pulse of the customer."

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– Larry Schenavar, IT Director, E-ONE

Plant agrees. "One of the great things about the Cincom technology is that there are so many paths you can move through to reach your end goal," he says. "So we had to determine what the correct path was for us, and the Cincom team really made that a much easier experience. They came in, analyzed our needs, and really became a part of our team in helping us to figure out the right path."

Laying the Groundwork

Plant says that product configuration management was a new concept to E-ONE, and Cincom helped them lay the groundwork for the EzONE solution. "Many of the aspects that the Cincom team helped us with still hold true today," says Plant. "They were instrumental in helping us get to where we are—not just in the beginning, but on an ongoing basis."

Easy Integration

Cincom's professionals even made the integration of the new system into the legacy software easy. "Every company has a suite of software that they use, and leveraging in or shoehorning in another suite of software can be difficult," Plant says. "With the Cincom technology, that wasn't a

problem. We were able to feed our ERP system, our reporting system and our financial systems. It all meshed seamlessly, and again, the Cincom team was wonderful in helping us figure out those touch points."

After the implementation was completed and EzONE was live, it was the Cincom Support team's turn to shine. "In the rare occasion that we do have an issue, they're right there," Plant says. "They're always available by phone or email, they always get back to us and they stay on top of the issue like it was their own."

Making E-ONE Successful

The benefits of implementing Cincom's technology have been extremely noticeable. For one thing, it greatly contributed to order processing and manufacturing efficiency.



"E-ONE had been struggling with profitability for quite a while," Peter Guile explains. "When we bought the company in 2008 from the original public company owner, we really looked at why we weren't making money. The Cincom team got involved with us and their guidance and technology helped us build the EzONE sales configurator that makes sure we're not accepting contracts for things that we can't build. We don't accept huge engineering projects without realizing what we're taking onboard and pricing accordingly. Six months after we bought the company, we became profitable, so with the drive behind using our configurator tool, help from the Cincom team, combined with our internal efforts, it's been a magic formula."

Turning the Company Around

Larry Schenavar ticks off the ways Cincom's solution helped turn the company around. "Using the Cincom technology, we time our release of the product with the release of the configuration for that product, so our dealers can order them when they're available, immediately. Using the Cincom technology, we can rapidly see what's out there and react to the changes that needed to be made. Using the Cincom technology allows us to capture the knowledge of the product as we build it and push that knowledge into the dealers' hands. Using the Cincom technology has allowed us to improve the timeliness of bid reviews and the accuracy of orders as they come in."

"The amount of information he could get, the amount of configurations that he could design and develop quickly and the amount of illustrations and drawings he could provide to the customer in a short amount of time really blew him away. He saw it as a competitive advantage in his market."

– Larry Schenavar, IT Director, E-ONE

Recruiting New Dealers

Schenavar says that E-ONE uses EzONE as a selling tool and a recruitment tool for new dealers. "It's a very powerful tool that allows the dealer to get information out of E-ONE without phone calls. They can get detailed specifications on customized products that they're developing for customers."

E-ONE recently recruited a new dealer from a competitor, and on his first visit to the company, they gave him a detailed review of the EzONE quote-to-order application. "He was blown away," Schenavar says. "The amount of information he could get, the amount of configurations that he could design and develop quickly and the amount of illustrations and drawings he could provide to the customer in a short amount of time really blew him away. He saw it as a competitive advantage in his market."

"Without the Cincom technology," Schenavar says, "frankly, we wouldn't be able to manage the front-end business the way we do today. It enables our channel to sell our trucks, to get information to the customers and to get the orders in the door."

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Jonathan Plant agrees. "One of the core features of the Cincom technology," he says, "is the rules-based engine. It allows us to be more confident in knowing that what we're offering to our dealers and our customers is absolutely a great product which can be built as specified. It adds another layer of protection for us and for our customers, knowing that the rules will be accurate and what we'll end up with is a buildable configuration."

Cincom's solution also allows E-ONE to make rapid changes to its sales offerings. Plant says changes can be pushed out to the sales channel in just a few minutes. "So we know that we constantly have the most current information for our dealers, and that's a positive thing for sales."

"Being able to leverage the Cincom technology has put us in a strategically well-placed position," Plant says.

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The Future

So would E-ONE work with Cincom again on future projects? Actually, they already are.

"Recently, we've been talking to the Cincom team about what our next steps are," says Plant. "We've got a lot of good ideas of where we can take this. We're definitely not capped out."

In 2007, E-ONE launched EzONE2go, a configuration tool that allows dealers and sales reps to design a truck without Internet access. Now, Plant says, they are looking to develop other versions of the configurator.

"There will be more EzONES to come. And like I said, the Cincom team is always there, always available to help us determine the correct path. We consider it an ongoing project."

About Cincom

Founded in 1968, Cincom is a financially strong and stable company. For over 40 years, Cincom has empowered partners and thousands of clients worldwide to outperform their competition by providing ways to increase their revenue, control cost, minimize risk and achieve rapid ROI. Over 800 professionals support thousands of customers worldwide.

The solutions Cincom Acquire provides for each client are specialized for simplicity, ease of use and flexibility.