



4700 140th Ave North #112  
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## REAL-TIME SOLUTIONS

# What A Configurator Can Do For You!

Complex products, services and sales processes require a unique set of tools to ensure timely and accurate sales quotes that meet customer needs and represent profitable products. The right configuration software validates design, configures and prices products, and drives downstream processes. It will also work with other automation processes that negate the inherent and costly risks of incorrect quotes and data.

A proven, integrated configurator working hand in hand with a quote to order process can alleviate these issues, which will facilitate efficiency and reduce costs. The benefit of using a configurator obviously depends upon the type of products that you market. Generally, the benefits are greater if you are having problems with: returned products, production errors, lengthy training or retraining of sales staff, or rework due to engineering or production requirements not known to the sales staff. The ability to offer different options leads to the likelihood of additional revenue on every sales order.

The automation of a system-wide knowledge base will empower your staff to conduct their business faster, more efficiently, more accurately and with more value added to your customers than ever before. Integrated configuration processes not only improve efficiency and reduce costs, but also strategically impact forecasting, new product development, profit margins, and market share. Using an integrated configurator allows you to automate business processes that are based on the way you order, validate, price, cost, or build your configured products or packages. Along with these benefits, additional benefits of the NDS Configurator include:

- Manufacturing work orders or purchase orders can be created directly from order or quote entry with the push of a button. Work orders will receive both a unique Bill of Materials and Routing based on the selections made.
- Share valuable knowledge among your sales, purchasing, engineering, and manufacturing groups—making it easier for your sales force and customer service representatives to specify the products the customers really need.
- Prevent engineering or manufacturing from rejecting orders for incorrect or incomplete configurations.
- Use a feature-rich configuration modeling environment to help determine up-to-the-minute pricing or availability of component items.
- When new options are added or components are substituted on a configured model, these changes are instantly recognized during order entry. Customer service representatives are notified of the updated configurations on existing sales orders and given the option of using the new or previous configuration.
- By ensuring that products are configured correctly, the amount of training required is substantially reduced.



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One of the simplest examples of a configurator is up selling or guided selling. A configurator is often used as a means to prompt Customer Service Representatives to offer additional options for products or services. If you have a product that can be configured in a thousand different ways, it is of course virtually impossible for the sales staff to keep track of all these combinations of the product. Companies usually solve this by having a certain number of standard combinations. Sales people typically market the configurations they personally believe in the most or that has sold well in the past. With a configurator you have access to all different configurations and the customer can be informed and then choose any option. The opportunity to inform and enlighten the customer of your options and capabilities leads to happier customers.

Another example where a configurator can be used is for configuration models. The model string configurator feature allows users to automatically configure models when entering the model item in sales order entry programs. When the model codes or named properties are entered along with the model item during sales order entry, the program configures the model according to the component items assigned to them. The string configurator allows you to pass all of the necessary values to the configurator in the item number field. This is particularly useful when importing sales orders through EDI, from web-sites or any other electronic means such as engineering design software. Any type of size-dependent product, such as windows, doors, blinds, shower doors and many other products, can utilize a string configurator. Model properties are used to validate the selections, and for properties that are defined as numeric, minimum and maximum quantities can be specified and enforced.

The most powerful configurator solution is based on constraints and attributes. To put it simply, you extract the core reason why certain components are compatible and add a constraint that matches those attributes. Basically, the configurator constraints will answer the question WHY certain components match, not just IF they are compatible. Validation for configurations can occur at several levels. A prompt, which is a group of options that can be selected, can enforce both a minimum quantity and a maximum quantity to be selected. User-defined attributes are also used as a validation method. Certain components will provide this attribute, when selected. Other components will consume them.

The NDS ERP Configurator is tightly integrated with the entire NDS ERP application suite. Sales quotes or orders can turn the configured items into purchase orders or manufacturing work orders with the push of a button. Projects in the NDS project tracking module can be configured, priced and created directly from the sales quote or order entry screen. Price changes and item availability display in real-time. This tight integration enables companies to efficiently quote, sell and process orders for configurable, multi-option, and customizable products and services. NDS customers are able to increase revenues while reducing costs by automating much of the sales, order entry, and engineering processes. Additionally, the NDS Configurator offers these features:

- **Configure and create managed projects.** The NDS Configurator can be used in conjunction with the NDS Project Tracking module, allowing you to estimate not only materials and labor, but also job purchases, resources and expenses. It can handle simple projects, as well as multi-level, sub-tier projects.



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- **Configurable routings based on selected components.** Manufacturing routings can be automatically built during configuration. This insures that the final configuration includes all relevant labor costs and the correct manufacturing sequence. By including routings automatically in the configuration, maintenance of shop standards is assured.
- **Store customer specific or frequently used configurations.** Storing configurations by customer part number allows for extremely fast and accurate re-orders. Frequently used configurations can also be stored by a common cross-reference number for all customers.
- **Reserve selected components that are lot or serial controlled.** During order entry, these types of components can be reserved, ensuring they are available when the manufacturing work order arrives on the shop floor.
- **Quick views for pricing, availability, attributes, routings and bill of materials.** During the configuration process, your sales team has access to real-time information on pricing, available discounts and inventory availability, as well as the current status of the bill of materials, routing and attribute usage.
- **Model copy function for quick creation of similar configurations.** When creating configurable models that are similar in nature, NDS provides the ability to copy an existing model to a new model number. In addition, prompts are used on multiple models, making the creation of new configurable models simpler.
- **Multiple pricing methods.** Pricing can be done at the model level, or the price of a model can be determined by the price of the individual components. Price matrix discounts, as well as margin pricing can be applied at the component price level.
- **Additional items can be added during configuration.** For engineer-to-order sales quotes, any item can be added to a configurable model on the fly, including regular inventory items and items that are not normally stocked.

This robust and powerful configurator is just one of the many features included in the NDS ERP Application Suite. NDS-ERP is state of the art in both application capability and underlying technology. This web based software is developed with Oracle tools and operates on an Oracle database and application server. Along with the NDS ERP application, NDS also provides Xephr – a robust data integration, collaboration and presentation toolset. Use Xephr to develop web based customer or vendor portals, shopping carts or any type of custom user interface. NDS Systems and our Nationwide Partner Network are dedicated to providing the best possible ERP product, support, consulting, training and implementation services.

For more in depth information about the NDS Configurator and how it can help your company, contact the NDS Sales Department or see the NDS Online Help at <http://www.ndsapps.com/webhelp.htm>.