

Infor PLM Accelerate: Flexible, Scalable PLM for Discrete Manufacturing Enterprises

CIMdata Commentary

Key takeaways:

- *Manufacturing enterprises need flexible, scalable PLM environments that can adapt to their changing business needs*
- *Infor PLM Accelerate is built on third party technology that Infor has significantly extended; they have also incorporated Infor's intellectual property into the solution*
- *Infor has used their ION[®] (Intelligent Open Network) platform to integrate PLM Accelerate with Infor technology and business solutions such as ERP and they plan to incorporate other solutions such Infor Ming.le[™] and Infor Configure Price Quote*
- *Infor PLM Accelerate is a cost effective, scalable, flexible solution designed to meet the needs of growing manufacturers*

Introduction

Manufacturing companies in every industry are facing challenges across all areas of their business. They must be able to quickly address these challenges in a nimble, flexible manner and quickly tailor their products to meet local and global requirements, while adapting to changing market conditions and emerging competition. Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) has become the platform that enables them to quickly develop, manufacture, launch, and service their products more efficiently, flexibly, and at lower cost.

Deploying robust and flexible PLM environments requires solutions built on modern, web/Internet-based standards and technology. They must be flexible and scalable to adapt to a company's business growth and change. For maximum efficiency, the PLM environment (which can include multiple solutions such as MCAD, ECAD, PDM, software, etc.) needs to be integrated with other enterprise systems, especially ERP, and to communicate seamlessly while simultaneously being able to adapt rapidly to changes in business relationships and supply chain partners.

At the same time, it is essential that PLM environments provide a user experience suited to today's social-oriented workforce. These are workers who grew up in the world of Facebook, Twitter, and Google, and want to work using the same interaction and collaboration paradigms used in their personal lives.

Suppliers of PLM technology and solutions such as Infor are working hard to deliver these capabilities so that discrete manufacturing companies in all industries can develop and deliver market winning products and leverage their personnel's and organization's intellectual property to maximum advantage.

Infor's Accelerate solution

The Infor PLM Discrete solution has been available for several years and is very effective for small to medium businesses with basic needs, e.g., product data management (PDM), and simple configuration and change management. However, it is limited in its ability to support

larger organizations and those with more complex products and development needs. Infor needed a PLM solution that could support current customers whose businesses were growing as well as new larger, global customers. Such a solution also needed to be integrated with their other enterprise and technology applications to help companies create a unified view of production, from conception through the supply chain.

CIMdata believes that Infor PLM Accelerate is an excellent and much needed addition to the Infor PLM product suite. It provides an alternative path to a more comprehensive PLM environment for discrete manufacturing prospects as well as current Infor PLM Discrete customers who need additional functionality or scalability. More importantly, it enables Infor to deliver a competitive PLM solution for their larger customers and prevent those customers from needing to use third-party solutions such as Teamcenter, ENOVIA, or Windchill. Infor PLM Accelerate is not limited to working within current Infor solution users as is demonstrated by recent Infor PLM Accelerate wins within new customers.

Infor claims they will continue to develop and support Infor PLM Discrete for those companies that do not need the broader capabilities provided by Infor PLM Accelerate. This two-level approach should enable Infor to tailor their solution more closely to the requirements of individual customers and provide a smooth growth path as each customer's business and needs evolve.

Initially, Infor will focus on delivering Infor PLM Accelerate to automotive, aerospace and defense (A&D), high-tech, and industrial manufacturing industries, primarily in North America. Industry and geographic expansion, started in November 2015, and will continue as Infor trains and grows their European Infor PLM Accelerate sales and services teams.

To develop Infor PLM Accelerate, Infor chose to work with Aras Corporation (Aras). From a technology perspective, Aras provides a highly scalable, secure, flexible PLM solution and a full product portfolio. Many third-party developers have created functional and industry specific capabilities built on Aras technology that Infor, and its customers, can leverage. From a business standpoint, Aras' business model should create little or no direct sales competition with Infor and the two companies are working together to eliminate conflicts while enabling each company to best support their customers and prospects.

Infor PLM Accelerate can be delivered as a standalone solution or in conjunction with other Infor products such as LN (Baan) and CloudSuite Industrial (SyteLine). It is already integrated using the ION integration platform with many Infor products. Infor offers Infor PLM Accelerate and its other solutions on-premise and via SaaS using a private cloud to give customers maximum flexibility to select how they want to acquire and use its capabilities.

Infor PLM Accelerate

Based on Aras technology, Infor PLM Accelerate is built on a modern web framework with a standards-based, web/cloud-ready architecture that is mobile enabled. It is easily and highly configurable to adapt to specific customer business needs. It can scale to support both small and large global enterprises. Security is built on a configurable need-to-know model. Infor PLM Accelerate supports multiple languages for both UI screens and data to support global, extended enterprises and supply chains. Released in November 2015, Infor PLM Accelerate Version 10.11.2 is based on Aras Innovator 11 SP2. Infor will continue to update Infor PLM Accelerate to support future Aras releases and Infor's PLM Accelerate extensions and complementary solutions.

Building on the Aras Innovator base, Infor has significantly expanded, enhanced, and tailored Infor PLM Accelerate using its proprietary technology. It incorporates Infor's 10x user experience and is integrated with other Infor enterprise solutions using Infor ION. Future releases will also incorporate Infor's social business collaboration and context-driven UI technologies to provide a rich user experience consistent with other Infor solutions.

Infor PLM Accelerate incorporates a full suite of PLM functionality, including:

- Revision Management for comprehensive revision and version control and change control workflows including electronic sign-off
- Configuration Management supports a comprehensive closed-loop system using industry standard certified methods for managing the configuration of a product or system throughout its life
- Document Management and vault capabilities include version and change control in a secure, searchable repository for files and objects in multiple formats
- Program/Project Management provides visibility into programs and projects to plan and manage resources, mediate risks, and optimize resources
- Parts Management ensures consistency of information by automatically managing relationships between part items and relevant CAD models or drawings
- Component Engineering helps simplify selection, approval, sourcing, and compliance for externally sourced electronic components
- Quality Control enables the use of APQP and FMEA tools to manage risk, improve quality, and achieve compliance with standards including TS 16949, AS9100, and FDA QSR
- Security ensures that all intellectual property is protected through customizable permissions, authentication, and access control

PDM integration tools enable customers to expand their product data management capabilities by integrating Infor PLM Accelerate with other PDM environments that manage CAD, parts, BOMs, and documents. Today, Infor provides out of the box integrations with Infor CloudSuite Industrial and Infor LN 10.4. In future releases they plan to provide integrations with Infor Configure Price Quote (CPQ), Infor Ming.le, Infor Visual, Infor XA and Infor CRM. Infor will continue to integrate Infor PLM Accelerate with new and updated Infor products so that it can be a complete PLM platform for the extended enterprise.

Infor upgraded the user experience (UX) by leveraging Infor SoHo Experience, their holistic, user-centered approach employed to improve user experiences in all Infor products. This user interface technology and environment is designed to enable companies to synchronize previously siloed data sources and deliver context-driven, role-based information directly to users anytime, anywhere. Companies and users can create personalized, collaborative work environments and centralized spaces for collaboration and information sharing and tracking.

Figure 1 shows the Infor PLM Accelerate user interface based on the Infor SoHo Experience, in this case showing a stage-gate process in Gantt chart mode.

To support product development authoring tools, Infor PLM Accelerate has rich multi-CAD integration capabilities. MCAD support includes Dassault Systèmes CATIA V5 and SolidWorks, Siemens PLM Software NX and Solid Edge, PTC Creo, and Autodesk Inventor and AutoCAD. ECAD integration includes support for products from Cadence, Mentor Graphics, Altium, Zuken, and Autodesk. According to Infor, additional CAD and other product

development authoring applications will be integrated with Infor PLM Accelerate as the solution evolves.

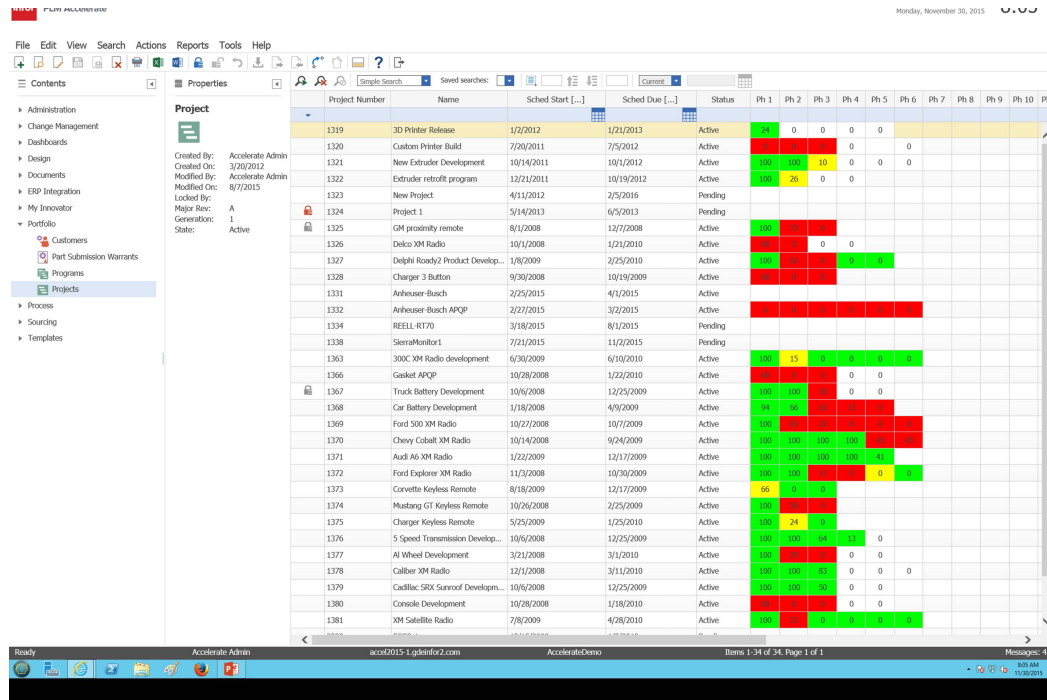


Figure 1—Integrated Stage-Gate Project Management

Summary

Manufacturing companies need PLM solutions built on modern, web/Internet based standards and social working paradigms that offer multiple deployment options. They must be scalable and flexible to enable a company to quickly develop, manufacture, and service their products more efficiently, faster, and more profitably.

With Infor PLM Accelerate, the company has a proven PLM solution for discrete manufacturers. While based on robust third party technology, Infor has significantly enhanced Infor PLM Accelerate with its own IP and technology. It has been integrated with other Infor solutions and technologies to expand its overall capability and provide companies with a consistent product development business environment. CIMdata recommends that manufacturing companies reviewing their current PLM solutions or looking at implementing one should include Infor PLM Accelerate and Infor when evaluating their needs for PLM.

About CIMdata

CIMdata, an independent worldwide firm, provides strategic management consulting to maximize an enterprise's ability to design and deliver innovative products and services through the application of Product Lifecycle Management (PLM). CIMdata provides world-class knowledge, expertise, and best-practice methods on PLM. CIMdata also offers research, subscription services, publications, and education through international conferences. To learn more about CIMdata's services, visit our website at <http://www.CIMdata.com> or contact CIMdata at: 3909 Research Park Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108, USA. Tel: +1 734.668.9922. Fax: +1 734.668.1957; or at Oogststraat 20, 6004 CV Weert, The Netherlands. Tel: +31 (0) 495.533.666.