

# Supply Chain Management Software Impacts Distribution & Manufacturing

## Supply Chain Management Software Impacts both Distribution and Manufacturing

By [Thomas R. Cutler](#)

Distribution software is a key element in the automation of supply chain management (SCM) functionality for small to medium size companies. From customer relationship management to inventory control and transportation, finding the best SCM solution ensures superior customer satisfaction for distribution companies across a number of industries. Increasing manufacturing and distribution has become a blended operation.



According to Rebecca Gill, vice-president of Technology Group International ([www.tgilt.com](http://www.tgilt.com)), “Smaller companies require quick and easy order management, automatically generated purchase requisitions, and extremely accurate inventory management. For larger firms, SCM distribution software must offer more advanced functionality like online product configuration, multilevel customer price structures, and full replenishment processing (which takes into consideration such elements as momentum, demand, vendor lead times, and minimum order quantities.)”

Gill noted that her company’s technology solution, Enterprise 21, allows manufacturing and distribution companies which require kitting or light manufacturing the ability to take advantage of process and discrete manufacturing functionality in the MRP/MRP II module, while warehouse intensive companies utilize the fully integrated warehouse management system (WMS) to the maximize their return-on-investment (ROI) through the usage of EDI, bar coding, RF, and RFID technologies.

For even more advanced automated wholesale distributors, the ability to solve such concerns as choosing the best warehouse or distribution center to fulfill sales orders in the most timely and cost effective manner is critical. Enterprise advanced planning software removes the guess work for management, by providing the optimal usage for the organization’s resources.

Key elements to ensure effective supply chain management in distribution and manufacturing:

- Online Quote Entry and Conversion
- Online Product Configurator
- Product Category Management
- Advanced Customer Price Sheets
- Attribute Based Customer Pricing
- Rebate Management
- Promotional Management
- UPC Code Creation and Storage
- Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI)
- Product Return Entry and Management
- Online Vendor Catalog Review and Processing
- Product Specifications and Data Sheets Storage, Printing, and Online Review
- Central and Local Purchasing
- Available to Promise & Capable to Promise On-line Visibility
- Public and Private Warehousing
- Distribution Centers
- EDI Enabled
- Barcode, Data Collection, RF, & RFID Enabled
- Web Enabled for E-commerce

The importance of an Online Product Configurator:

Most manufacturing and distribution firms struggle with quoting, order entry, and manufacturing of highly complex and configurable products such as doors or windows. Some key ERP software has built in product configurator functionality specifically designed to manage the enterprise-wide needs of such advanced manufacturing and distribution companies.

The configurator speeds up quoting and order entry time; it also decreases costly errors by eliminating non-buildable products. This functionality is obtained by creating a rules-based product configuration matrix that provides easy-to-use, selection criteria for the end user. The software must allow for streamlined product configuration by providing a simple drop-down menu approach with immediate online graphics to show the user the configured product. This feature creates an internal cost savings; it dramatically increases the level of customer satisfaction by providing an intelligent sales force that is quick to respond to customer requests. To offer even greater pay back, the configurator must be fully web-enabled to allow for internet deployment and serve as an electronic expert which can help customers purchase products in a real-time, 24/7 store front setting.

Whether a large or small distribution or manufacturing enterprise, distribution software must be flexible to optimally provide supply chain management for various types of industries.

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