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DIFFERENCES & BENEFITS OF
SOFTWARE CONFIGURATION VERSUS CUSTOMIZATION

PRODUCED BY:
OUR SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS.

DIFFERENCES & BENEFITS OF SOFTWARE CONFIGURATION VS. CUSTOMIZATION

Manufacturers commonly misconstrue the difference between software configuration and customization. From a strictly financial perspective, software configuration initiatives cost far less to implement than customization projects. Simply conducting a rudimentary cost-benefit analysis confirms this fact. Understanding the differences and benefits of software configuration versus customization can potentially amount to significant savings for manufacturers that leverage the full potential of updated quality management systems.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOFTWARE CONFIGURATION AND CUSTOMIZATION

The misconception between configuration and customization is one of scale. Essentially, software configurations allow an enterprise to establish data fields, element names, workflows and other similar settings included within a particular software. Configurations may also allow enterprises to create or remove drop-down menus and buttons to adapt the software to align with a business's manufacturing processes more thoroughly. Often, when an enterprise speaks of software customization, it really has configuration in mind.

Software customization, on the other hand, is far more complex - and expensive - than configuration. The configuration approach aims to take advantage of the built-in flexibility of a particular software system, but customization involves altering the code of the software itself. Enterprises can execute software customization initiatives by deploying vendor-specific tools to impart new functionality within a given software.

THE BENEFITS OF CONFIGURATION VS CUSTOMIZATION

Software customization projects are expensive to launch and maintain, requiring a long-term commitment to adapting modified code to periodic vendor software updates. In one manner of speaking, relying strictly on software customization creates a perpetual cycle of implementing, changing and managing compatibility with software updates. Further compounding the issue at hand, it is not uncommon for manufacturers to deploy a siloed approach to IT in general, which may call for the deployment of several disparate customized systems. Another drawback of software customization is the likelihood of over-customizing software beyond the original scope of the code.

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Software configuration initiatives are much more cost effective to deploy. First of all, enterprises do not have to allocate significant human resources to manage perpetual customization projects, which frees resources to be redeployed elsewhere in the IT supply chain. Configuration takes advantage of the flexibility inherent within the software. For example, the FMEA systems of a medical device manufacturer and an automobile manufacturer would require much different configurations. Deploying a software that is agile enough to accommodate these intricacies is critical and far less expensive than making wholesale alterations to code.

Customizing a quality management system is an expensive proposition, particularly if configuration options are available within the software. To successfully implement any updated quality management system, enterprises must achieve synergy with the principles of lean manufacturing. The end goal of configuration is to reap the most value out of a new software deployment, allowing enterprises to avoid the costly process of customizing software altogether and instead opt for an integrated IT solution that includes personalized configuration potential and expert support services.
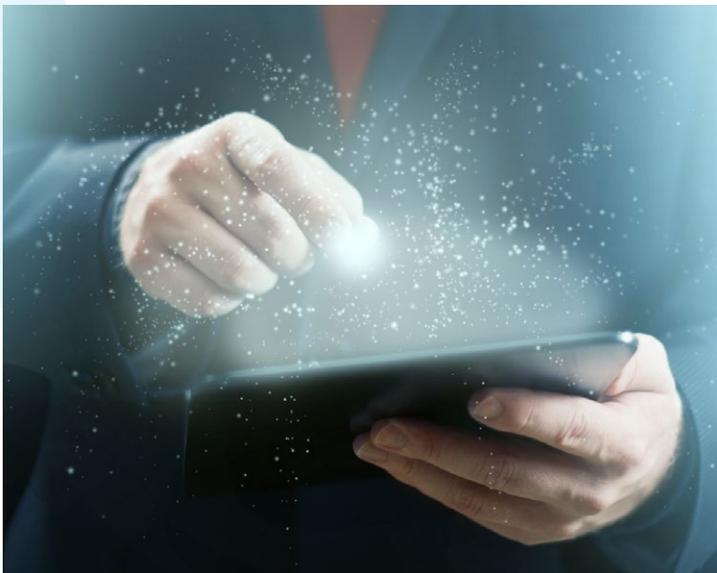
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