

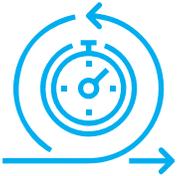
Customer demand for solutions that combine hardware products, software and services, mean high-tech companies need a new, harmonized product model.

By enabling future-ready configure, price and quote capabilities, as well as fulfilling/provisioning and invoicing for combinations of hardware and software products, this new model will allow companies to go to market with connected offerings that create opportunities for follow-on sales of services that drive recurring revenues.

With data volumes on track to grow 50-fold by 2020, and faster and faster release cycles for products and services increasingly the norm, action is needed now. Having manual, customized processes and traditional product models makes it complex to manage, change and respond at pace. A lack of standardized controls or governance means traditional product models are prone to error, and missing, duplicate and inaccurate item information can pose a significant business risk.

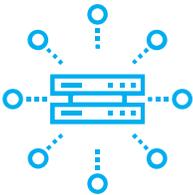
Harmonizing product models will require a product data hub that enables product data consolidation with data quality controls: standardization, de-duplication, and automatic attribute value-setting. Automation and governance are absolute 'must-haves' for a new product model, and they should operate as ongoing processes, driven by clearly-defined KPIs.

To be future-ready, the underlying solution must be supported, governed and enabled by the right technologies. New product models will benefit from a modern application platform that has the following key characteristics:



SPEED AND AGILITY

Organizations need to ensure that product information can be onboarded quickly and accurately to accelerate time-to-market and drive faster release cycles. They need to leverage technologies to automate processes and to maintain one consistent version of the product model information throughout the lifecycle. As these product lifecycles compress, getting products and services out to customers at the right time will drive gains in market share.



OMNI-DIRECTIONAL

Effective collaboration with customers, suppliers, distributors and between external and internal parties is essential. To achieve that goal, the technology infrastructure should be unified and integrated in order to provide the social platform for an ecosystem of players to interact, share product knowledge, modify product change requests and support constant feedback loops among and between parties.



REAL-TIME AND TRANSPARENT

Today's new business models demand near real-time statistical and model-based analyses of product performance data. This calls for mechanisms that can establish a bi-directional "feedback loop" of information that flows across the product value chain, embracing product design, vendors, distributors and customers.



SECURE AND INTELLIGENT

As organizations expand their ecosystem to include more players, seek value from external sources, and as product and services become more and more complex, it's increasingly critical to get data security right. The amount of product data is often overwhelming. Organizations are having to sift through it to distinguish the "gold from the garbage." A platform that has intelligent features can not only mine the data, but also leverage their power for security and compliance intelligence.

Organizations that employ these key features in a modern application platform will be well-poised to have the infrastructure and architecture to support the demands of new product models. And ultimately that will enhance their ability to compete in an evolving, dynamic marketplace.

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