



TR Cutler Authors Manufacturing ERP Feature for Machine Design Magazine

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PR9.NET November 11, 2005 - Thomas R. Cutler (www.trcutlerinc.com) is the President & CEO of Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based TR Cutler, Inc., the largest manufacturing marketing firm worldwide. Cutler is the founder of the Manufacturing Media Consortium of 2000 journalists writing about trends in manufacturing. Cutler is the lead spokesperson for the ETO Institute (www.etoinstitute.org). Cutler authored a feature for the October issue of Machine Design.

Roger Meloy of Encompix Inc., (www.encompix.com) an Engineer to Order (ETO) Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software maker based in Cincinnati, said, "Ask most design engineers what an ERP system means to them and you are likely to hear 'nothing' or 'more work,'" One reason for the perception: Most ERP systems are not integrated with CAD. That's because traditional ERP systems were developed for repetitive, make-to-stock manufacturers where there is a clear demarcation between design and production.

In this environment design engineers create a product in CAD. After testing and prototyping, the item goes to engineers who tailor it for mass production and create a bill of materials (BOM). The BOM is based solely on how an item is to be manufactured, not on its design, all of which takes place in ERP software. The design engineer throughout the process has little or no interaction with the ERP system. Once a design is frozen there is little interaction between the design and production departments.

In ETO firms the role of design engineer is very different. Such companies build products specifically for individual customers. Design and manufacturing departments work together more closely. In many cases product design continues through production (design in process), incorporating several engineering changes along the way. These changes may be driven by the customer or by the manufacturer, necessitating a seamless flow of data between engineering and production. Integrated CAD-ERP software lets ETO companies pass data both ways and handle engineering changes in both systems. Without it, designers are constantly re-keying data from CAD to ERP software, which wastes valuable engineering time or requires additional staff.

ETOs, unlike repetitive manufacturers purchase items only one time for a particular job. Typically the engineer will specify the item and its manufacturer, bypassing the ERP system altogether. Makers of ERP systems that collaborate with Product Life Cycle (PLM) vendors can address these needs.

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About TR Cutler, Inc.

Professional Marketing Firm reaching the Manufacturing Community Worldwide

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