AUTODESK

Three steps to set your manufacturing business up for innovation

Every week, design and engineering teams will spend almost three working days on non-essential tasks. That lost time can have a massive impact, especially when those tasks take them away from focusing on innovations that lead to business growth.
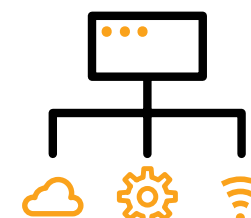
By digitizing your workflow, you can manage your entire product development process through a web browser. That'll make it easier to minimize inefficiencies, delays, and errors—freeing up your team to do more of what matters most.

1 Create a roadmap

Your product development process can be managed through the cloud from concept to manufacture and beyond. You can start at any point in your workflow, so the first step is to pick an area. Ask yourself questions like:

More detail:
With a flexible, cloud-based PLM system, you can start small and build out digital workflows at your own pace, without the risk of overwhelming your teams with sweeping changes all at once.

Is there anywhere you could replace spreadsheets, or make sure they're more visible across multiple teams?

How many times does the same data get entered into different places?

Are your remote and hybrid teams able to collaborate effectively?

Next, you can define your goal by identifying the quick wins where product lifecycle management (PLM) can deliver the most impact in the shortest time. Prioritize processes that are admin-heavy, involve a lot of people, and are essential to getting your product to market. Examples include quality management, bill of materials management, and supply chain management.

21.5 hours a week of worker time is spent on non-essential tasks, such as updating information or chasing approvals[1]

[1] Data from Autodesk internal customer surveys

2 Make the switch to digital processes

The next step is to roll out a standard workflow as simply as you can.
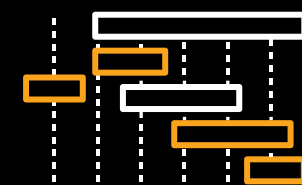
More detail:

Product lifecycle management will help to ensure all your data is traceable, so whether you need to process change orders or learn where a component came from, you'll have all the information you need to get it done without delay.

This will involve:

Training administrative staff to use and drive the PLM system.

Creating project plans with milestones and tasks, and assigning owners to those tasks. You can configure project templates and standardize milestones, deliverables, and tasks by product line, business unit, or product team.

Why?

Using standard workflows will improve your time to market. Everyone involved in the lifecycle of a product—including suppliers and partners—will be able to:

· Manage files and track changes across design versions, regardless of what software they were created in.

· Have real-time visibility into when a task is complete, as well as who is doing what and why.

· Create tailored workflows using PLM's ability to intelligently route tasks for the next best action.
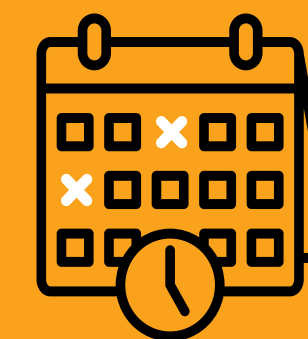
3 Do more of what matters

At this stage, you should have saved a lot of time normally spent on non-essential tasks. Multiple departments and external stakeholders will be able to collaborate on designs in one place, reducing time to design approval so you can get to production faster and adapt to changing market needs.

More detail:

The time your teams have saved will leave them more space to focus on innovation. In addition, they can use product lifecycle management to support research and development by:

- Looking at previous products and making incremental changes based on feedback or diversifying your product range by leveraging lessons learned.

- Making informed decisions on supply requirements, predicted time-to-market, and more, whenever you introduce something new, allowing you to develop more innovative solutions for your customers.

45%
of product launches
miss launch dates[2]

[2] *https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2019-09-09-gartner-survey-finds-that-45-percent-of-product-launches-are-delayed-by-at-least-one-month*

Case study: Aclara

Aclara Technologies, a global supplier of smart infrastructure solutions, switched from on-premise to cloud-based PLM to better manage the introduction of new products.[3]

With a cloud-based PLM system, the Aclara team is now able to:

Accelerate design cycles through global project visibility and bill of materials (BOM) management, so everyone involved in developing a new product is on the same page and instantly notified of any updates.

Prevent potential errors by ensuring suppliers acknowledge receipt of all design changes.

Lower costs by no longer having an on-premise PLM system, which involved a lot of investment in hardware support and engineering man-hours.
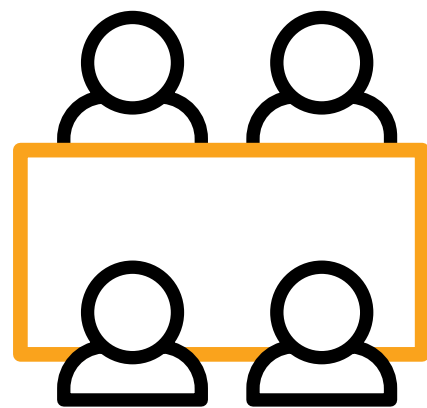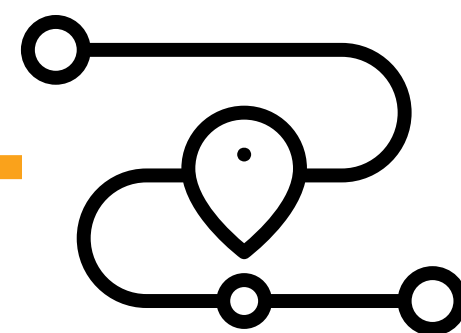
More detail:

Over the past ten years, Aclara Technologies has scaled beyond its birthplace of Missouri, with new facilities in Spain and the UK as well as acquisitions of other companies and product lines. This success was fantastic, but led to integration challenges whenever new products were developed and introduced to the market.

[3] *https://damassets.autodesk.net/content/dam/autodesk/www/solutions/plm/overview/aclara-customer-story-en.pdf*

Take the first step

If you would like more information or support completing any of the steps above, Autodesk can help. Please get in touch to:
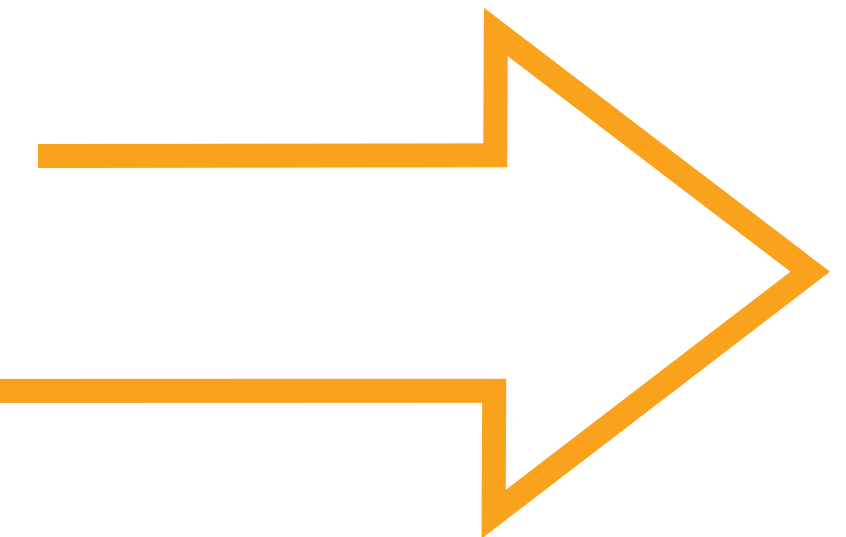
Arrange a deeper dive session on where product lifecycle management could have the most impact in your business.

Create a personalized roadmap with our connected product development experts.

Take advantage of our free employee survey to understand your current costs of doing business.

Want to learn more?

Get in touch for a personalized consultation today.