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CONFOR 

*product finding, configuration and
dimensioning*



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CONFOR - product finding, configuration and dimensioning

Companies that offer a wide range of products need intelligent solutions to help them configure products that are in demand by customers. This is essential to configure manufacturable products in a reasonable time, reliably determine their price and transmit the resulting bill of materials (BOM) to ERP or merchandise management systems. Tailor-made products must be created from standardized components. CONFOR supports you and your customers directly in carrying out these process steps.

Advantages

Especially by providing a product finding and configuration system for use by your customers, you kill two birds with one stone – you improve your service and relieve your sales department. Errors that frequently occur in the manual configuration of complex products are virtually impossible with a system-supported approach – the risk of incorrect deliveries and the resulting additional costs and delays is significantly reduced. Your advantages in detail:

- In each case, the most cost-effective configuration is determined that meets the customer's requirements.
- Quotes that take hours or days to manually create can be created in a matter of minutes, including all printable documents (if desired, even by your customer himself).
- All data required for order fulfillment are already taken into account in the quotation phase. When placing an order, no more activities are required.
- Due to the exact calculation basis, no "risk surcharges" are required in terms of date and price.
- The probability of an order increases.
- The number of products that can be produced in a given period of time increases.
- The calculation reliability with regard to costs and deadlines increases.
- The complaint rate is minimized.
- Customer satisfaction increases.

How does it work?

In order to enable an automated configuration process, the dependencies between the individual product components (in short: the product logic) must be stored in CONFOR. For this purpose, the product to be configured is divided into component groups according to its BOM structure, for which in turn where-used documents (= lists of the parts that can be used in the individual component groups) are maintained. The dependencies between the component groups are stored using formula-based rule tables. This set of rules results in the individual selection options for the individual product components, supplemented by component properties for which there are no dependencies. The required article master data is usually provided via an interface of the ERP or merchandise management system.

For which projects is CONFOR suitable?

CONFOR is particularly well suited for the design of products with a complex product logic. These include, for example:

- Gearboxes
- Pumps
- Valves
- Ventilation systems
- Climatization systems

For these and comparable products, complex computational operations and algorithms are required to determine combinable components.

System structure

The system consists of the CONFOR base system and numerous standardized functional components.

The products to be supported are implemented in the form of configuration modules.

The CONFOR base system and the configuration modules use functions of the functional components, such as rights management or print management.

The system architecture allows the implementation of the required configuration logics in closed modules, so that a wide variety of project requirements can be covered without the need for manipulation of the basic software. The release capability is maintained with every installation and the user benefits from the continuous further development of CONFOR even after project completion.

The CONFOR base system

The CONFOR base system provides the basic functionality and the interfaces for the integration of functional components and application modules. Basic functions such as user authentication and database connection are implemented here.

The system interface is based entirely on HTML and is displayed and operated exclusively via web browser.

The configuration process

After selecting the product type/group to be laid out, the basic data of the product to be supported is entered in the first process step. A wizard then guides you step-by-step through the selection process of combinable product components and accessories. The product logic to be taken into account can be freely defined. Complex calculations can be integrated into the configuration process.

Integration with E-Commerce-solutions

CONFOR can be integrated with webshop- or E-Commerce-solutions. For the configuration process, the master data of the E-Commerce-solution can be accessed directly, so that no redundant data storage is necessary.

Functional components

Customer master data

CONFOR contains a special module for managing customer master data. As a rule, this data is provided by another system (merchandise management, ERP).

Product master data

Product master data must be provided to CONFOR as the basis for the finding and configuration logic. A significant part of this data can usually be transferred from other systems (merchandise management, EPR, CRM) via interfaces.

CONFOR provides its own administration functions for the administration of master data and, in particular, the product features to be supported by the finding and configuration process.

Pricing

During the configuration process, the price of the overall product is constantly updated. Both the manufacturing costs and the sales price can be determined. Individual customer discounts can be taken into account when determining the sales price.

Quoting

CONFOR supports you in the complete preparation of an offer. For example, discounts can be recorded in a very differentiated manner.

Created offers can either be passed on to other systems (e.g. CRM) or output directly in different formats (Word, PDF, ...).

Print management

The print management module provides extensive printing and export options. For example, all documents can be sent in various formats such as e.B. MS Word, MS Excel or Acrobat PDF.

Documentation

With CONFOR you can generate extensive documentation on the configured products fully automatically and output them in different formats (Word, PDF, ...). The integration of complex calculations is also possible as well. With the integrated drawing sheet generator, stored dimension sheets can be provided with the values from the current configuration.

Fast-track configuration

Standard selections can be defined for all selection steps to be carried out during the lay out process. Thus, a standard product configuration can be carried out in just a few steps. The standard selections made can be changed at any time.

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Plausibility checker

The stored set of rules distinguishes between "must" and "should" rules. "must" rules must be adhered to - in case of violation of "should" rules, notices are issued to the user. These notes are always displayed in the product overview.

Number generator

For number assignment, CONFOR leverages a freely parameterizable number generator that enables the implementation of very complex, customer-specific numbering systems.

Authorization

In addition to a conventional authorization system in which user- or role-related rights can be assigned for the individual system functions, CONFOR supports additional data-related authorization configurations to enable, for example, the use by customers, who should not only have a subset of functions available, but also only be able to access their own master and order data.

Other system features

User group specific user experience

Due to the different requirements of the individual user groups of a CONFOR solution, the system provides corresponding individualization possibilities for the user interface. The use by an end customer, for example, requires considerable functional and data restrictions compared to the use by an internal office staff member.

Multi currency support

CONFOR is completely multi-currency capable. All amounts of money managed in the system can be recorded and stored in any currency. Where necessary, amounts are converted into the local currencies of the respective customer (e.g. in an offer). Exchange rates can either be recorded manually or automatically updated via price tables provided in electronic form (e.g. by Internet-based services, banks, etc.).

Multilingualism/Localization

CONFOR is designed to be multilingual. The language of the interface usually depends on the national language of the logged-in user. In the output of quotes, all product-describing texts, units of measure, etc. are based on the national language of the addressee. When used in suitable operating system environments, special character sets of non Latin origin such as Chinese or Greek are also supported.

Furthermore, the output of arbitrary values in country-specific units is supported. For example lengths can be issued in the metric or Anglo-Saxon system, depending on the addressee, or weights in kilograms or American pounds.

Server-based operating concept

All components required for the operation of CONFOR can be installed server-based. As a result, no installation effort is required on the individual workstations of the users.

Blackbox-Version, REST-API

A pure calculation DLL without interface ("black box" version) is available for integration into customer calculation programs. CONFOR can be integrated into other programs via web services as well as via a DLL-based interface.

Offline-Version

The offline version can be used on workstations without a network connection to a CONFOR server. It can, for example be made available to customers or used by sales representatives who do not have a network connection on the go. Both master and design data can be synchronized with the network version when network is available.

Technology

No Code Customizing

From the extensive functionalities of the CONFOR system, powerful overall solutions can be created without programming with the help of a wide range of customizing options. For example, web interfaces are implemented purely descriptively, both the order and labeling of elements, as well as the arrangement on different pages or tabs.

Userexits

Userexits allow the user to implement own extensions of the CONFOR system in programming languages such as C# or Java. This event-driven interface provides the ability to automatically execute certain user code when performing certain CONFOR transactions. The interface provides the most important transaction-related data. For example, the user can create an own online interface for the transfer of quotation or order data to a merchandise management system.

Client specific Look and Feels

The CONFOR look and feel can be configured according to the user's specifications. This is especially interesting for companies that want to make the system available to their customers and have to provide a user interface that fits their corporate design. So CONFOR can be integrated seamlessly into one's business website.

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Requirements

CONFOR is based on the .NET framework from Microsoft and supports all common SQL databases.

On the server side, the following components are supported:

- Operating system: MS Windows
- Webserver: MS IIS, Azure App Service oder Apache

The operation on the client is preferably carried out with the help of the current versions of common web browsers such as MS Edge, Firefox, Chrome, Opera, Safari or MS Internet-Explorer.

COSMER

COSMER GmbH
Westfalendamm 98
44141 Dortmund

Germany

Phone: +49 (0)231 58689414-5

E-Mail: info@cosmer.com

If you would like to know more about CONFOR and our other products and services, please visit us on the Internet at <https://www.cosmer.com/>

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