



# Keeping Up with the New Manufacturing Buyer

*The ultimate guide to staying up to date  
with the latest customer experience trends  
in manufacturing*

# Introduction

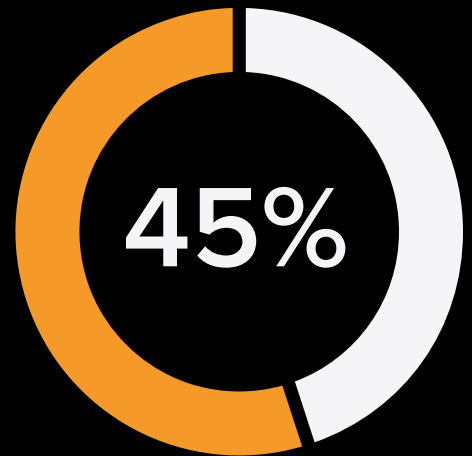
In our recent eBook, [Manufacturing Trends to Watch in 2022](#), we outlined five trends influencing manufacturing this year. One trend that continues to impact businesses for the foreseeable future is the new buying experience. Customers now more than ever expect an easy way to either buy products digitally or get as much information around a product to make a purchase with assistance from a sales team. The pandemic has increased this trend and manufacturers are taking notice.

According to a recent Tacton survey, 45% of manufacturers believe improving customer experience will help them bolster economic growth. However, many manufacturers have struggled to create a flawless and flexible buying experience for their customers.

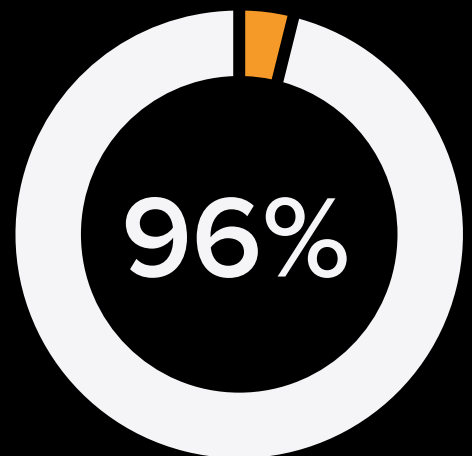
While manufacturers have acknowledged this struggle, they can't seem to find ways to make it work. Accenture notes just how far some companies are behind "96% of companies want to transform their sales department, but only 7% have plans to act in the next 1-2 years".

Manufacturers are looking to expand their reach while ensuring to maintain loyalty with their existing customer base now more than ever. With disruption to regular operations becoming a constant with the pandemic, businesses are striving to make the overall buying experience a priority. The in-person sales touch was already reducing with significant information available online and has only accelerated further with the pandemic.

With so much at stake for manufacturers it's important to find out how to create a unique customer experience. Let's look at what customers want and how manufacturers are using new solutions to deliver on their customer experience goals.



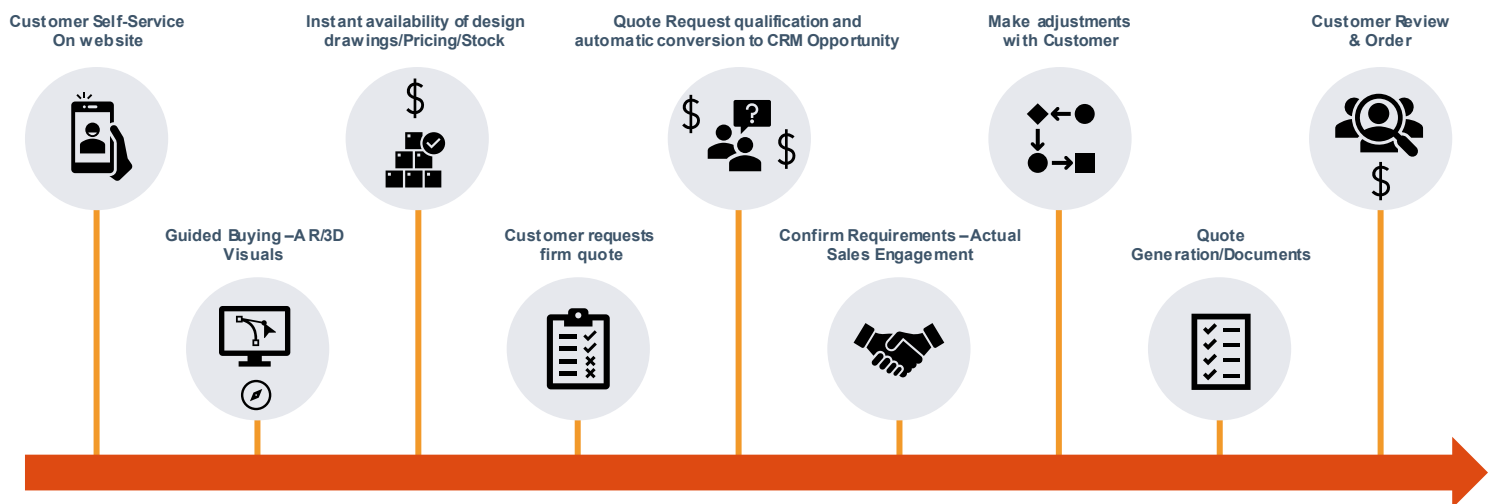
*45% of manufacturers believe improving customer experience will help them bolster economic growth.*



*96% of companies want to transform their sales department, but only 7% have plans to act in the next 1-2 years.*

# The Ideal Buying Journey

With so many customers accustomed to agile, tailored and immediate solutions provided in the B2C buying space they are looking for the same speed from B2B sellers. In the ideal buying journey customers enter the company's website and are quickly able to use self-service to get a guided buying experience configuring their products. Customers will then be able to use 3D visualization and augmented reality to show how their product would look in their real-life environment.

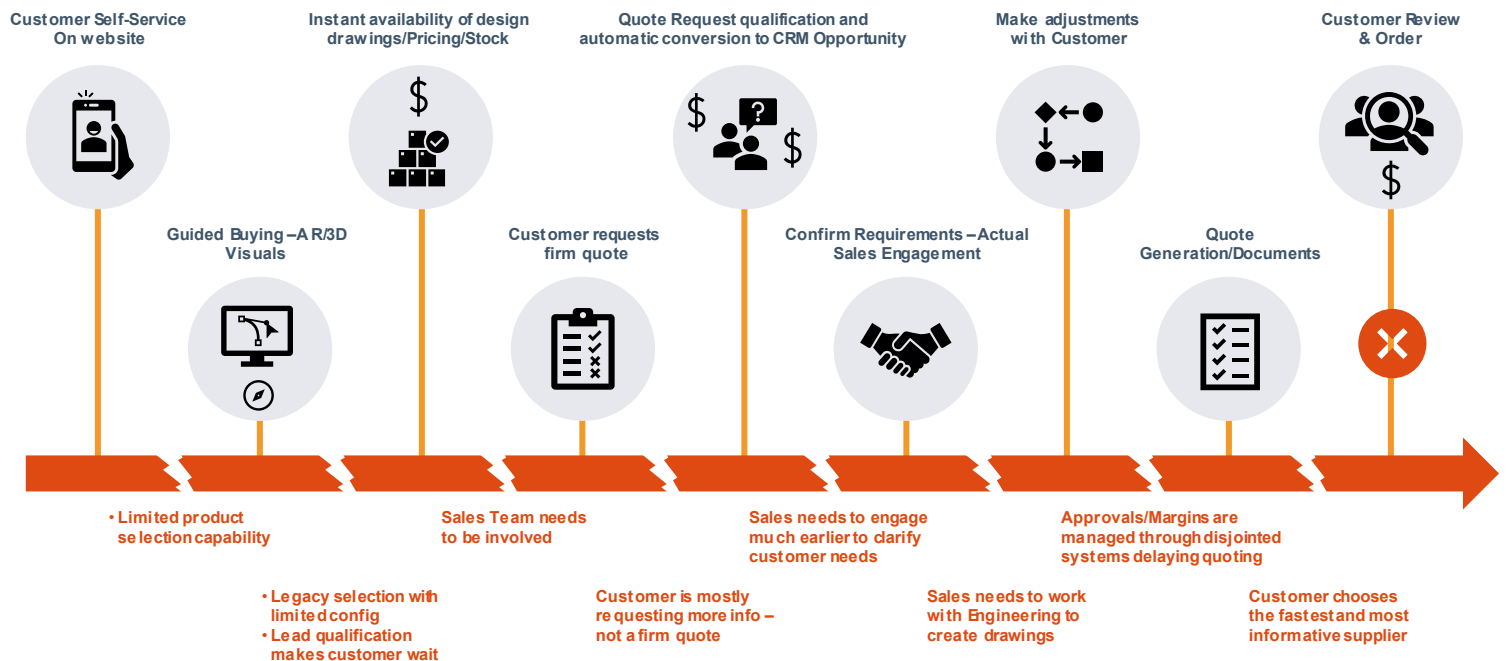


After this exciting configuration experience, the customer can instantly see the price, get design drawings and availability information. Next customers can request a firm quote that will be qualified by an inside sales team, and they can tie it directly to a CRM opportunity. Once this exact configuration has been qualified by the sales manager the team can update any margin or pricing details and generate an updated document for the customer. The customer will then be able to approve the final design and it will be sent into production.

While this perfect journey sounds great, the current customer experience is plagued with challenges, slow processes and more. Let's look at what the reality of buying is for customers...

# Typical Challenges Faced in the Buying Journey

While we listed the ideal buying journey for customers, it's a lot harder to provide this experience for manufacturers. In many cases manufacturers can't provide any kind of self-service product selection on their website, only equipment information. Instead of providing 3D visualization these companies tend to give images with parametric product selection for the customer to provide more information. This makes the inside sales teams work on qualifying the lead even more difficult and leaves the customer waiting for a quote with no design or pricing information.



The business won't even be able to offer a firm quote because there wasn't enough information at the start of the configuration. This leaves the customer unable to make any decision with the inadequate information online leaving pressure on your team to provide accurate data and drawings. After the back and forth between sales and engineering, the customer finally receives a price. **Due to this disjointed process, the customer will be reviewing other options directly from the competition.**

With so much enthusiasm to tackle this challenge head on, it's possible to forget some of the barriers that are in the way of enabling a truly customer-centric journey for your buyer.

# What do buyers want?

As explained in our [manufacturing trends book](#), new buying behavior is shifting towards the B2C selling experience due to the purchasing decision makers having grown up in a digital native generation. Today the key elements sought by B2B buyers are:

1. A rich and informed buying or decision-making experience prior to having connection with a sales staff
2. Transparent and accurate information on product capabilities, application, pricing, product availability, sustainability and additional documentation
3. Easy channels of communication with the right individuals such as your account executive who already has the details of the current configuration instead of restarting the process
4. A buying experience that differentiates the manufacturer from their competition. Just sharing basic product information will not cut it for buyers anymore. They want to know as much about the product as they can before they make their decision

## *How are manufacturers adapting to the new wants of their customers?*

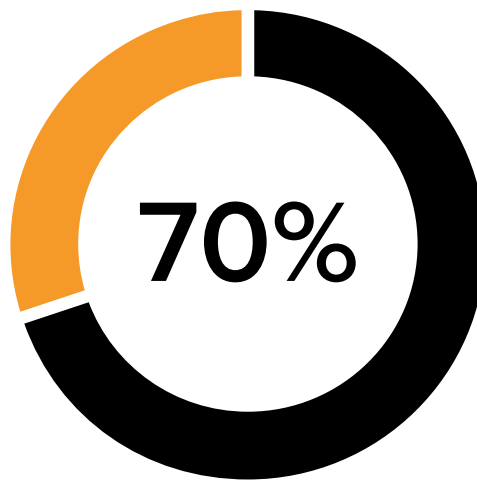
1. Executives are planning more digital transformation spend for their annual budgets especially towards enhancing the selling processes for their Sales teams and web experience. According to IDC the projected value of investments in digital transformation between 2020 and 2023 will top 6.8 trillion dollars
2. Overall customer experience is becoming a key focus for top management as it can be a differentiator keeping customers loyal

Meeting the needs of customers is critical to long-term success for manufacturers. Finding a solution that connects the customer to the manufacturer through an exciting digital journey could be all the difference. One of the key digital transformation tools that is becoming central to effective selling is Configure, Price, Quote (CPQ) solutions.

# How is CPQ Transforming the Customer Experience?

## *Accelerated turnaround for any customer request*

Manufacturers across the globe have seen their market share decline in the past few years to immense global competition, the pandemic and supply chain issues. Fierce competition is making it critical for manufacturers to find ways to enhance their customer experience. This competition makes it essential to turn as many of the custom quotes into actual orders. With 70% of quotes never becoming orders<sup>1</sup>, it's important to capitalize on customer interest in a fast and accurate manner.



*Of quotes never become orders.*

CPQ helps manufacturers reduce quote time from days to minutes. Manufacturers are used to a slow and manual process with a heavy reliance on back of office functions for every quote or price revision which creates a slow response time, loses revenue and has your customers looking for other options. This happens because Tacton CPQ makes configuration easy and empowers non-technical sellers and buyers to configure correct complex equipment on their own – without technical support. This configuration comes complete with correct sales BOM, and pricing that provides the customer with the real final net price, no more guessing.

1. Data is collected through Tacton's surveys with actual customers.

## *A unique, and engaging customer experience*

When a prospect comes to a manufacturer's website, they want to see how their products would look in their real-life environment. With CPQ it's possible for customers to explore their configured products with visualization and augmented reality. This enables a seamless buying experience across channels that connect customers directly to your brand. Powered by CPQ integrated into your web experience, anyone has the power to configure highly customized industrial manufacturing products based on their defined needs.



Guided selling asks questions based on customer requirements, building an optimized solution in real-time. When paired with 3D visual configuration, the customer can see every change they make on their screen in real-time.

Additionally, leading visualization capabilities include [augmented reality \(AR\)](#) for an even more immersive B2C-like experience. A powerful CPQ paired with 3D Visualization all but guarantees you are generating high quality leads with low touch- all through your website. Providing visuals that are exactly what the customer selected provides an accurate and trusted representation of their final product, leading to reduced errors.

## *Respond quickly to any disruption*

The last two years have taught manufacturers to expect the unexpected. Disruption has created challenges in the supply chain, making it harder to source customers' orders. Customers will not accept receiving their products in a timely manner. CPQ can create a data handshake between customer needs and order fulfillment, your factory and the supply chain. This helps minimize order errors and makes sure any configured product can be delivered within a budget and timeframe. This gives flexibility to provide other options for your customer to purchase.

## *Creating a one-of-a-kind customer experience starts with trust*

To succeed in a quickly changing manufacturing landscape, it's critical to find new ways to respond to customer needs. Relying on manual processes that create incorrect quotes, slow lead times and a bad customer experience is harming your brand, and bottom line. That's why leading global manufacturers are trusting Tacton to help them digitally transform how they sell. Discover what Tacton can do for you.



## **Tacton Trusted Configuration**

Sales Made Simple for Complex Manufacturing

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Tacton is a leading SaaS company trusted by global manufacturers. Tacton Trusted Configuration simplifies sales for manufacturers of complex products. Tacton's Configure Price Quote software is named a Visionary by Gartner in the Magic Quadrant for CPQ Application Suites and is recognized for its advanced product configuration and visualization capabilities. Tacton's founders pioneered computer-based product configuration which today powers Tacton CPQ and CAD Design Automation. Since 1998, Tacton is trusted by global customers such as ABB, Daimler, MAN, Scania, Siemens, Xylem, and Yaskawa. It is co-headquartered in Chicago and Stockholm, with regional offices in Karlsruhe, Warsaw, and Tokyo.

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