New research by Tech-Clarity and PTC highlights four key success factors that distinguish high performers in Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) from the rest of the pack:

- Strategic business alignment
- Process-based solution design
- Reduced customization of PLM software
- Comprehensive, role-based learning and adoption

Sounds pretty obvious, right? Well, sort of. But, as usual, the devil is in the details. The practical reality is that the companies that actually follow these approaches in detail achieve business results far greater than those which take shortcuts in planning, implementation, and adoption.

On average, the 200 business and IT leaders from Europe and North America in the survey reported modest improvements in the three most important business objectives that drove their PLM investments: time to market, product development efficiency, and reduction in product cost.

About the Research:
PTC Global Services and Tech Clarity, an analyst firm that specializes in product lifecycle management, interviewed 190 senior business and IT leaders in April 2012 about their experiences with PLM. The goal of the telephone survey was to understand key success factors in planning, implementing, and adopting PLM solutions in complex manufacturing environments.

The survey highlighted four issues: PLM strategy and approach, programmatic challenges, implementation and adoption techniques, and adoption. Survey participants included representatives of a wide range of manufacturing companies across Europe and North America, including automotive, aerospace, industrial, and consumer products.
A Closer Look

Digging deeper into the data, however, we can see that a “high performance” group of companies are realizing business improvements five to ten times as great as the average and lower performing companies.

What are these PLM leaders doing differently?

The most important differences lie in how companies plan and manage their PLM initiatives, regardless of experience level or scope.

In particular, high performing companies are much more likely than others to emphasize four things in planning and managing their programs:

1. Strategic business alignment: Align PLM planning to key business objectives with detailed implementation roadmaps and scorecards to ensure program accountability for business value, not just technical improvements.

2. Process-based solution design: Focus first on business process improvement and look to software capabilities that support process change, rather than taking a software-first approach.

3. Reduced customization of PLM software: Hold the line on software customization to keep costs in check and preserve flexibility for future growth and change.

4. Comprehensive, role-based learning and adoption: Take a more strategic and role-based approach to learning and adoption of the new processes and tools vs. relying mostly on basic training for software features and functions.

Most companies will naturally gain more value from their PLM programs as time goes by and the organization gains more experience with what can and cannot be accomplished across the organization. For those that want to accelerate time to value, however, these four key success factors truly separate the high performers from the rest.

About PTC Global Services

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