

# Changing the way engineers work using digital tools

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I remember visiting customer sites several years ago – where we would see shelves upon shelves of huge product catalogs. The engineering and procurement teams would spend hours searching for information in those volumes. Conversely, I recently returned from a customer visit where they told me that they no longer want printed product information. Instead of pouring through catalogs, they search online. Their work and expectations are being influenced by the evolution of digital tools.

According to McKinsey, 86 percent of business-to-business users have said they prefer a self-service personalized tool to complete their tasks and conduct business. We see a similar trend on our Emerson.com website, where we average more than one technical document downloaded for every visitor. These digital expectations are clearly impacting change in how engineers do their work.

An area of engineering that can be greatly streamlined with self-service digital tools is product specification. Engineers can get the information they need when they need it to more effectively do their work with a collaborative environment, powerful sizing and selection tools, and access to experts – rather than digging through thousands of pages of information.

**IMPROVED COLLABORATION**

With digital collaboration and a centralized workspace, multiple engineers can work together on the same solution or project. Errors are reduced through improved communication and centralized tracking – and duplicate data entry is eliminated. When the solution calls for additional expertise (whether from other sites, other departments like procurement or reliability, or from product manufacturers), digital workspaces help connect the right people. By using digital tools, these teams are more productive and confident in their work.

**MORE EFFICIENT ENGINEERING**

Product specification work is arguably the biggest engineering productivity opportunity for digital tools. Instead of using ordering and specification tables in product documentation, engineers can build a model number in real time using a visual configurator. Not only can they see a physical representation of the device to ensure it meets their requirements, engineering tools allow them to specify exact operating conditions to confirm their selection. That information is then seamlessly transitioned into a device configuration. When talking to our customers, they have reported the ability to engineer a product up to 93% faster when using these digital tools.

**SELF SERVICE INFORMATION**

Engineers often need CAD drawings for design work or installation tasks. In fact, we receive more than 12,000 drawing requests annually for our flow-measurement portfolio's flange-to-flange dimensions. By employing digital tools, engineers can specify a product online and immediately generate a CAD drawing of that exact product. Or, if it is an existing product, by simply inputting the product details for the relevant wiring diagram.

By embracing new digital tools and transforming the way they work, engineers can be change agents in their organizations.