

IBM-Siemens Pact Opens New Ways to Streamline PLM Processes

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The IBM-Siemens technology integration opens new product life cycle management opportunities. Gartner views the potential ability to manage embedded software more integrally as the most important benefit of the integration.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Event

On 19 June 2009, IBM and Siemens announced the availability of Siemens Teamcenter software integrated with IBM's Product Development Integration Framework, which incorporates IBM's "Blue Stack" of middleware, security and database software.

Analysis

IBM and Siemens are addressing one of the key product life cycle management (PLM) concerns of manufacturers making products with embedded software: that software is becoming critical to a growing number of manufactured products. This announcement opens new opportunities to manage software development as part of product development. Other PLM software providers, such as Dassault Systemes and PTC, will probably have similar agreements with IBM by 2010.

While Gartner views embedded software support as the most important new value of this announcement, IBM architected its Product Development Integration Framework (PDIF) to simplify the interface between multiple product data management (PDM) systems and other categories of product development software, such as simulation and test data management. Therefore, Siemens' Teamcenter customers that also run other PDM systems will benefit.

It will take time and cost for manufacturers to adopt and leverage the offering. Gartner clients that spoke with IBM about PDIF report that PDIF is an evolving solution. Although IBM claims it already has significant PDIF customers, IBM has not provided references. We believe they are probably early in PDIF deployment and use. Also, the integration will require Siemens customers to run on Teamcenter 8, which was announced 23 June 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Gartner clients dependent on embedded software to deliver customer value should explore this capability. This is particularly true for aerospace and defense, automotive, telecommunications, consumer electronics, machinery, robotics and medical device companies.
- Siemens customers running on Teamcenter 2007 or earlier that manage embedded software or interface with other PDM systems should upgrade to Teamcenter 8 and PDIF in a risk-managed way.
- IT managers responsible for PLM deployments: Be clear on accountability. Contracts for software and service should be explicit about IBM's and Siemens' accountability for software function and performance.
- Manufacturers that plan to deploy PDIP should review details on operating support and database support available from IBM at www-01.ibm.com/software/integration/wps/sysreqs/?S_CMP=rnav and http://publib.boulder.ibm.com/infocenter/dmndhelp/v6r2mx/index.jsp?topic=/com.ibm.wesphere.wps.620.doc/doc/cins_db_specs.html

RECOMMENDED READING

- “Vendor Focus for Siemens' Ambitious Manufacturing Software Strategy” — Given its automation heritage, Siemens must prove that it is responsive to dynamically changing IT needs. **By Marc Halpern, Andrew Hughes and Dan Miklovic**
- “Product Simulation and Test Content Management Requirements to Accelerate Product Design” — Managing simulation and test content for reuse and regulatory compliance is becoming more important in discrete manufacturing. This report reviews the criteria to select such capabilities. **By Marc Halpern**

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