

# PLM Pioneers

## Achieving Long Term Transformational Success with PLM in Life Sciences, Part 2

by Dave Hadfield

In this blog series, I will provide some insights to why PLM has true potential to be so transformational and consider some of the obstacles that companies in the life sciences industry encounter.

In my [first post of this series](#), I talked about the most common missed opportunity for life sciences companies as they implement PLM. Now I'll cover one of the reasons behind this, as well as what it takes to be a true PLM pioneer.

Based on my observations, companies within the life sciences industry will buy or build countless point systems. A point system helps to automate one or a few processes, most often with minimal consideration to the broader need for integration.

The various departments typically use their budgets to meet their unique set of needs. This results in islands of automation that solve isolated problems. For example, many of the organizations I have worked with rampantly purchase standalone purchasing control tools, quality solutions that manage CAPAs and complaints, and requirements and risk analysis programs.

With these point solutions, individuals or individual groups may be able to do their job somewhat better than before, but at an enterprise level, costs skyrocket and there is no visibility to data across the business. The departments will continue to waste time trying to manage quality data coming in and out. I have interviewed hundreds, if not thousands, of life science engineers over the course of my career, and so often they all say the same thing: "We had some problems with our product, but I didn't hear about them for six months."

I believe that the first organizations to truly achieve smart processes - fully integrated and automated - will have an opportunity to turn their best ideas into high quality, effective products, moving them more quickly and more efficiently into the market. This will enable them to respond to customer insights and product issues at a faster rate. They will do this at a fraction of the traditional cost and be first to market when compared to competitors.

I am not just talking about those that implement PLM to automate 3 or 5 or 7 processes, but for the 75-150 processes that affect all aspects of the product concept, design, delivery, marketing, distribution, globalization and post-market quality improvement. These companies will use a PLM solution and tightly couple it with ERP and MES. They will not tolerate standalone tools, or limited multi-point solutions. Their mantra will be seamless process and data flow. Although I have not seen any company come close to achieving this level of solution yet, certainly not across the entire product lifecycle, conversations and discussions have begun regarding how to architect a truly enterprise-wide solution.

I think these companies will be like the first settlers in America; the pioneers. While their journeys will be fraught with challenges and untold hurdles, their opportunities will be massive. Those that make this journey will outpace their competitors at every turn.

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## About the Author



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Dave brings over 17 years of experience in product lifecycle management (PLM) to Kalypso's clients, with deep expertise in the medical device industry.