



CPQ Booster for ICT VARS

A Native Salesforce Solution



A Business Overview of CPQ Booster

The ICT VAR market segment (AKA High-tech Resellers) has several unique characteristics that are not addressed effectively by generic quoting solutions such as Salesforce CPQ Revenue Cloud.

StrataVAR's CPQ Booster provides a number of enhancements, that come into play when the two tools are combined together, resulting in an optimal quoting solution for VARs of ICT.

We've outlined the main elements of the integration between StrataVAR's PqW (that functions as a booster to Salesforce's CPQ), and Salesforce CPQ works.

The outline defines the problems ICT VARs face while using generic quoting tools and how the CPQ Booster solves those problems for VARs of ICT.

Technical Overview of StrataVAR's CPQ Booster

The StrataVAR CPQ Booster is a Force.com native application that acts as a pre/post-processor that allows some complex operations to be executed outside of the CPQ logic.

For example, it handles all inbound and outbound integrations, Excel file creations and more.

1. Vendor & Distri Integration

The problem:

The High-tech VAR is almost always forced to use the Configuration on the Vendor's portal (such as Cisco's CCW). In CPQ terms, the Configuration (C in CPQ) is on the Vendor portal and cannot be replicated in any other system, since the configuration rules are of enormous complexity.

Therefore, being able to integrate with the Vendors' portals that can digitally retrieve the valid Configuration, is crucially important.

Without proper integration, this list of items may span over 100's and 1000's items, must be exported from the portal and the manually imported to CPQ. Moreover, the Line Items have hierarchical structure up to 5 levels.

In addition, the use of a SF/CPQ Catalogue is useless because of costs that the VAR is charged for. A specific Part Number will vary for each deal, due to competitive situations that significantly impact the VAR and End-customer discounts.

Use Cases for this problem

a. Cisco CCW

The problem:

Cisco CCW Portal is one of the most critical components in the VAR's workflow. VARs use CCW to create a valid solution and then Export the BoM in Excel format, which they then need to manually copy & paste the data into CPQ.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

The CPQ Booster solves this problem, by API based integration with Cisco CCW major sources: Estimates, DealReg, and CCW Renewal, SaaS Quotes, SaaS Modifications and more.

The User can import data directly into StrataVAR's platform with 1-click. The CPQ integration is a major time saver and eliminates manual re-keying and tracking of errors.

b. Distri & Other Vendors

The problem:

Typical ICT solutions involve multiple suppliers such as Ingram Micro, Comstor and TD Synnex, as well as other vendors such as IBM, HP, Palo Alto Networks, and many others.

Many Vendors and Distributors do not have API, and provide their Quotes to the VARs in a complex Excel format. Manual copy/paste is tedious, error prone and it's nearly impossible or very difficult to manage change requests triggered by the end-customer.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

Distis that support the required API are directly integrated into CPQ Booster for 1-click retrieval.

In case the Supplier does not support any API, StrataVAR's CPQ Booster includes an Intelligent Excel Parser that can digest dozens of formats and sources and automatically convert them all to standard Objects that are integrated with CPQ.

2. Scalability

The problem:

Supplier Quotes can contain complex configurations or Renewal Quotes that include 1000's and 10,000's of items. It is not only impossible to import that number of items into CPQ as is, but it's also extremely challenging to modify pricing for such long Quotes.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

CPQ Booster is designed specifically to handle very long Quotes. CPQ Booster can import and export 10,000's of items, and through a special grouping/aggregation function, reduce the number of items to transfer to CPQ.

With a unique function, called "The Bulk Price Edit" the user can modify Cost, Discount, Margins, Markup etc. of the largest Quote, and provide CPQ with pre-processed financial data.

Furthermore, the CPQ Booster can export Customer-facing Quotes with 10,000's of items.

When CPQ's maximum number of Quote Lines is a critical roadblock, StrataVAR's Booster can provide aggregation through pre-processing aggregation, based on various "grouping rules".

For example, in a Renewal Quote that spans over 10,000 items, grouping and aggregation by Service Level, can reduce the size to 10 CPQ Quote Lines.

3. On-demand Catalogue Creation

The problem:

One of the challenges in the VAR eco system is the vast number of Part Numbers that Distributors and Vendors carry, yet only a small percentage is usually sold by the VAR.

Cisco alone has 1.7M items in its catalogue.

Maintaining millions of records synchronized between Salesforce CPQ and Suppliers is just not realistic. The cost itself is dynamic and changes from one deal to the other based on competitive situations and other factors.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

The CPQ Booster supports on-demand Master Item creation (in Product2 and Price Books) during the import process of Vendor or Disti Quotes. The Product2 items can be enriched with Vendor data, especially Cisco's when available.

4. Extended Multi Currency

The problem:

VARs that operate globally face a need to manage complex multi-currency use cases. For a single customer solution, a VAR may purchase from different suppliers using different currencies, and then nominalize all into a single Quote Currency.

However, the Quote Currency may not be one static number like standard Salesforce MC supports. It needs to be based on dated exchange rates, and the Exchange Rate (and date) must be editable and impact the values of the Quote.

The original cost needs to be saved in the original currency and value, regardless of exchange rates of the quote currency, so the VAR is able to order from the Supplier in the original currency and original value, regardless of any currency fluctuations.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

The CPQ Booster's "Extended Multi Currency" provides a solution for this, both in StrataVAR's quoting platform (PqW) and in CPQ.

The quoting platform extends the based SF AMC with Dated Exchange Rates on any object and special functionality to convert back and forth, keep special fields with currencies different than the record currency, convert currencies either permanently on the records, on the fly while editing financials, or during Quote Export.

StrataVAR's quoting platform also allows to display different currencies while editing the pricing within the "Edit Quote Grid".

5. Vendor Validation & Consistency

The problem:

The configuration engine on Vendor's sites (such as Cisco CCW) create complex configurations composed of 100's and 1000's of items, arranged in hierarchical structure up to five levels, with sophisticated, behind-the-scenes configuration rules maintained by the Vendors.

Working with plain flat BoMs may easily invalidate the configuration and render the Quote impossible to deliver, which may result in delays and financial penalties.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

CPQ Booster respects the BoM structure imposed by the Vendor, not allowing the user to invalidate the imported BoMs.

6. Complex Pricing Pre-processing

The problem:

When dealing with complex configurations and solutions, the pricing for each item may vary, based on its Item Type (Hardware, SaaS, Maintenance), Duration (for SaaS and Maintenance) and other aspects.

In order to apply correct pricing, the Item Type and other rules must be configured. CPQ may be able to handle it but requires significant customization.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

StrataVAR's quoting platform has a built-in functionality to that identifies Item Type and applies pricing accordingly. This information can then be transferred to Salesforce CPQ via the integration.

Depending on the deal, VARs may use different pricing methods for all three groups of parameters: VAR Cost, Margin/Markup, and end-custom Price.

With dynamic discount modes, the user can select how changing one of the above parameters propagates to impact the other, enabling cost & price management not available in other tools.

7. Contracts and Subscription Renewal Management

The problem:

One of the most profitable areas for High-tech VARs is the renewals of Maintenance Contracts (for equipment) and Subscription. However, the quoting challenges around this process are enormous.

Mainly because renewal quotes tend to be long and complex, reaching 1,000's and 10,000's of items.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

The CPQ Booster has the ability to incorporate long quotes, up to 50,000 items and aggregate results for CPQ based on some grouping criteria such as Part Number, Service Level, Location etc.

8. Vendor Rebates

The problem:

Vendor Rebates are an important vehicle for VARs that register for qualified tracks to increase their razor-thin profit margins by selling the more advanced solutions in specific time periods.

Knowing what the extra profit is for any item in any period helps enables the VAR to gain price competitive advantage. Calculating the values in CPQ is very difficult and nearly impossible.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

The CPQ Booster supports the Cisco VIP (Vendor Incentive Program) and allows real time calculations of the eligible extra profit, creating an advantage in the bidding war. PqW can transfer to CPQ either the raw extra VIP margin or a net cost inclusive of the benefit.

9. Complex Customer Quote Formatting

The problem:

VARs are often required to issue Customer Quotes in Customer specific format or in other cases, provide creative formatting to denote complex pricing, configuration relationships etc. Salesforce CPQ can support relatively simple output formats, and a 3rd party tool such as Conga may be required.

Not only there is a significant additional cost, but generic tools do not necessarily "understand" the structure of the Quote and cannot present the information in the required format and structure.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

StrataVAR's "Quote Export" functionality is optimized to display complex configurations.

For example; 7-level hierarchies, separating different Item Types into sections or Tabs, enablement of different columns for different sections, hide/show sections based on user input, hide/show columns based on user input and support both Excel and PDF output formats.

Many VARs prefer the Excel output format not just because their customer may demand that in order feed to their own systems, but because it allows the VAR team the freedom to make some cosmetic changes easily.

10. Quote Assembly Flexibility

End-customer require solution composed of multiple Vendors, and the VAR must have the flexibility to build multivendor Quotes, mix & match partial Quotes, refresh Quotes according to Customer's requests.

Use cases for this problem

a. Quote from Multiple Bills of Materials from Multiple Sources

The problem: VARs must provide multi-vendor solutions to their End-customers, composed of various Vendors and Suppliers into a single End-customer Quote.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

PqW enables assembly of any number of source BoMs, in full or partial, before it is fed into CPQ.

b. Refresh & Iterations

The problem: A typical customer proposal often goes through several iterations due to Customer requests. The VAR must easily refresh the Quotes without redefining all pricing and content.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

PqW allows refreshing Vendor's configurations applied with few clicks without redefining the whole pricing, saving significant time and human errors.

c. Selective

The Problem: Often, the vendor's quote (such as Cisco Deal Registration) contains multiple options or equipment that are quoted in clusters over time.

Customers often require different versions of these clusters with some optional items. The VAR wants want the option to easily and reliably select only a few configurations from multiple sources and build several Customer Quotes from the same set of input BoMs from Cisco and Disti.

How CPQ Booster solves this problem:

CPQ Booster can manage the various clusters and offer either optional components without aggregating the prices or offer one large deals in smaller clusters.

11. Sales Order & Invoicing Integration

As Bonus Benefit: Tier-1 Partners can utilize CCW Integration of Cisco Sales Orders and CC Invoices.

The Sales Order integration allows SF PqW Users to see the exact status of each ordered item, identify shipping dates slippage, track delivered serial numbers and more.

Invoicing integration allows VARs to download SaaS invoicing from Cisco including changes to fees based on overages or changes to the SaaS contract scope.

Conclusion

In conclusion, StrataVAR's CPQ Booster significantly enhances the value of Salesforce CPQ by enabling the functions mentioned above and resolving all sorts of integration, scalability and complexity issues that typify the IT VAR segment.

Meet us for a demo & contact us at sales@StrataVAR.com.