

BID Group leveraged PTC's ThingWorx to simplify the common “DIY vs. buy” dilemma with a purpose-built customer solution

Launching a digital transformation journey means facing a key decision early on

It's no secret that adopting advanced technologies across operations can create huge gains for any manufacturing business. From improved OEE and increased throughput to upticks in customer satisfaction points and revenue, those who embark on digital transformations see significant and lasting impacts.

But preparing for such a transformation requires planning for some early critical decisions around software licenses, development time, and partner prospects. For many manufacturers, one of the first items to consider is how to find and implement the right Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) solution capable of meeting a slew of complex needs—enter the common “DIY vs. buy” dilemma. On the surface, developing a DIY platform may seem more cost-effective or customizable, but it also requires deep technical knowledge, years of implementation time, and investment in oversight and a dedicated development team. Unfortunately, many companies lack the deep domain expertise needed to be effective. This creates a trade-off dynamic that pits the desired industry-specific solution against an easy installation and fast time to value.

So how do companies reconcile these tough decisions in the best interest of time and value? One industry leader recently traveled this road and has some valuable insight for others.



BID turned to PTC for IIoT expertise after confronting DIY reality

The BID Group, a leading supplier of turnkey solutions to the wood processing industry, has gained valuable experience in digital transformation. With more than 35 years of experience, BID was familiar with common industry challenges—slow adoption of technology, variable raw materials, and high levels of scrap, to name a few—and they were not immune.

Hoping to accelerate growth internally and throughout the industry, BID set out on their own digital transformation journey. Knowing they wanted to leverage IIoT technology, BID initially partnered with a small software development firm to create a platform for collecting and monitoring production data. But they struggled with the proposed platform and couldn't produce the desired insights needed to move forward. Ultimately, they realized that the software development firm lacked the necessary expertise, and a new plan was needed.

Rethinking their approach, BID turned to PTC for IIoT expertise. They began by using PTC's ThingWorx, an end-to-end IIoT platform, as the connectivity backbone of their smart connected facilities. Leveraging ThingWorx enabled BID to gain visibility into production and asset health with real-time data analytics and a rich array of insights and production reporting. They also added alerts to their high-speed bearings and applied other component-level monitoring, alarming, and analytics to identify abnormal conditions and better monitor asset health. With the new solution, BID improved the overall reliability of their manufacturing equipment and—with straightforward customization capabilities to meet the individual needs of each customer location—

saw double-digit OEE improvement in customer mills, setting them up to scale quickly across other facilities.

BID's customers also faced the same "DIY vs. buy" dilemma

BID's customers faced three basic choices when pursuing their goal of creating a connected facility: first, a customer could simply purchase a ThingWorx license from BID or another re-seller. But that typically involved hiring a development team and learning the software, not to mention 12 to 16 months of development time. Second, a customer could choose different IoT software altogether, which would result in a generic platform that required two to three years of customized development and a big price tag. Lastly—and the ideal option that offered the most flexibility and fastest time to market—a customer could partner with BID using a SaaS model in which BID leveraged their industry expertise to develop a highly focused IIoT solution, purpose-built for the customer's environment and quickly deployed for the lowest cost.




As a customer-focused company, BID wanted to leverage their own experience to help their customers succeed. They introduced a new offering called OPER8™, which provided customers with a purpose-built IIoT solution for gaining visibility into production and asset health using real-time data analytics and a rich array of reporting. BID developed OPER8™ with confidence that it had proven advantages for customers. After their own unsuccessful attempt at building a DIY data collection platform, BID recognized that many of their customers would travel the same route and face the same decisions—so they wanted to offer a clear path to success.

While the choice may seem clear, BID recognized that some customers would consider the same temptation they did to follow the DIY route, hoping for a more customizable fix. But it rarely turns out that way, explains Steven Hofer, Executive Vice President, Strategy and Business Development at BID. “We’ve learned a lot from our own experience and have molded this solution to form-fit our customers so they don’t have to endure the trial and error that often comes with DIY solutions,” he says. “Investing in OPER8™ has allowed our customers to scale very quickly—we’re talking time to value in days, not months or years.”

There's value in sharing knowledge and experience

BID has always been a customer-forward company. “We started out as a company with core values around building world-class teams and providing the best service we can for our customers,” says Hofer. By better supporting both their customers and internal teams through digital transformation, BID has set the foundation for continuing to deliver exceptional results in record time.



“We’ve learned a lot from our own experience and have molded this solution to form-fit our customers so they don’t have to endure the trial and error that often comes with DIY solutions.”

Steven Hofer,
Executive Vice President, Strategy and Business Development, BID

www.ptc.com/en/case-studies

© 2020, PTC Inc. (PTC). All rights reserved. Information described herein is furnished for informational use only, is subject to change without notice, and should not be taken as a guarantee, commitment, or offer by PTC. PTC, the PTC logo, and all PTC product names and logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of PTC and/or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. All other product or company names are property of their respective owners. The timing of any product release, including any features or functionality, is subject to change at PTC's discretion.