

Stop wasting time and money!

Five reasons to embrace a next-generation design solution.

I. Competitors want your market share – so stop them

If you're not looking over your shoulder, you should be. Right now, hundreds of companies are planning to break into your market area, or are already doing so. What will really hurt you in the future is that you won't know who these competitors are or where they are located, until it's too late.

To avoid that sucker punch you need to be aware it's coming, and fight back. It's coming because globalization, increasing connectivity of everything courtesy of the Internet, and changing design trends have redefined how and where electronics design is done. To survive as the economic downturn bites, but more importantly to thrive once the downturn is over, your company needs to change the way it creates products.

What's needed is a higher-level, holistic approach to product design that focuses on the unique user experience that your products and company can offer. How the product functions, looks, and how it connects to the wider ecosystems such as the Internet all combine to create a product that delivers sustainable differentiation in the market. Ultimately, people buy experiences, not products.

This means challenging many of the assumptions you and your designers engineers hold about electronic product design. The traditional approach based on silos of experts using expensive best of breed tools that our loosely connected together can no longer cut it in a competitive, globalized market, because it imposes barriers to your greatest ally in the future – engineering innovation.

Companies that survive and prosper will be those that capitalize on innovation by moving to a holistic approach to design, one that focuses on the whole product and broader value it brings to the customer. This requires a unified electronics design solution that embraces all aspects of electronics design in a single environment and enables a soft-centric approach to product design.

2. Dominate your competitors with innovation

Because there will be thousands of companies in the world that can create products like yours, probably quicker and cheaper, your company needs to stand out by designing unique products that engage, connect and provide an ongoing relationship with customers.

This means asking hard questions about what makes your company's products unique and competitive. Cheaper and acceptable alternatives may already be available, so why should your customers continue to buy from you? Even the strength of your company's brand and your customers' loyalty are not sustainable advantages. (You've probably already discovered that your customers' brand loyalty is increasingly only as good as their last interaction with your products.)

What is unique about your company's products is innovation, and when applied to a strong focus on long term customer needs and the user experience, this becomes hugely competitive. Such products can only be created by taking a holistic, soft-centric approach to design and tapping into the creative capabilities within your company, and that means removing the barriers to electronics design innovation.

Bringing the whole design process into one unified application and eliminating low-level complexity provides that environment. It allows engineers to focus on the final product and ongoing user experience while exploring new design concepts and ideas, and being able to immerse themselves in every possibility available to them.

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3. Wake up the creativity in your engineering staff

In this time of global change, your company's design teams may be your most valuable assets. The value is not just their ability to follow process, design what's required and implement the result, as there are teams all over the world that can do that. What is valuable for developing competitive products is their ability to innovate and consider the broader design picture.

But there's every chance they can't. To find out, ask these questions:

- Do your design teams only focus on their specialized area of expertise?
- Are they in a position to consider the whole product and customer experience in the way they design?
- Is it easy for them to explore and create systems that enable long term connected relationships with customers?
- Can they easily adopt new design techniques and technology as they emerge?
- How easy it is for them to explore and experiment with new device technology?

The answers indicate how free they are to innovate, or conversely, how restricted they are by their own limitations and the design systems they use. You have the opportunity to remove those constraints to innovation by driving the change to a holistic design approach, and arming your design teams with an electronics design solution that supports it.

Just sitting there watching the global electronics design industry realign itself will sound the death knell for your company. It's time to focus on innovation and seize the opportunity to dominate your competitors.

4. Keep up with the latest technology, or it will pass you by

Stay ahead of your competitors also means keeping pace with the latest design technology and investigating how it can make your products more competitive. The electronics design systems in your company must be recharged with new and relevant technology as soon as it's available. You can be sure your competitors will be on to it as soon as they can.

Not exploring and adopting new technology leaves your company vulnerable to those that do. The electronics industry and the technology it produces moves extremely quickly, so any technology advantage in your designs is valid, but unlikely to last. When new technology arrives, design teams need to be able to harness it to create a competitive advantage.

To make this possible, your design solution supplier must anticipate future trends and arm your company with the tools needed to explore and embrace them. Be wary of design solution providers that artificially segregate or hold back on design technologies, while they provide the newest technologies to an elite group of customers prepared to pay a premium price.

The electronics design tools your engineers use must be continually developed to keep you at the forefront of design technology. This gives your engineers the freedom to innovate and to make best use of new technologies to fully capitalize on the customer experience and emerging market opportunities.

Time to take back the unfair advantage.

5. Reduce costs and time to market

Competing on a global stage during difficult economic times means your company is sensitive to the costs. The electronics design solution you use must offer a realistic and practical cost with no hidden surprises.

Everything you need for designing the next generation of intelligent, connected products needs to be included in the box, ready to go, and without the need to buy add-on modules to tackle advanced design tasks. Your engineering teams can focus on creating competitive product designs, rather than worrying about whether you've bought the right combination of point tools and add-ons to do the job.

A single, holistic design solution also simplifies and streamlines every step in the design system lifecycle. The unified design environment centralizes the management of design data, libraries, procurement and turns the path to manufacture into a few mouse clicks. This frees everyone involved in the design process to focus on bringing unique, competitive designs to market quickly and more easily.