When will PLM become the Norm?

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- Published by -
LinkedIn Pulse
January 14, 2016

Previous posts have shown how PLM emerged in 2001 as a result of many driving forces that had been developing in previous decades.

Although PLM emerged in 2001, those who work in the PLM field know that, even in 2016, it's far from fully implemented. They may wonder how long widespread full acceptance and implementation of the PLM paradigm will take, and ask, "When will PLM become the norm?"

While I was thinking about this some time ago, Brad Goldense wrote an article called *The Embodiment of Open R&D Innovation Management Begins*. Brad is the President of Goldense

Group Inc. (GGI) and an expert on innovation, R&D and product development. The article was based on the results of GGI's *2014 Product Development Metrics Survey*.

One sentence in particular caught my eye. Brad wrote, "Bodies of knowledge take four to six decades to flesh-out and mature". I asked him about this. He replied that the figures were based on his experience, and cited examples from areas such as ERP, project management, nanotechnology, and robotics.

So, using Brad's figures, and assuming the PLM Body of Knowledge was started in the 1980s, it looks as if it may not flesh out until between 2020 and 2040.

Independently of Brad's figures, I had tried to estimate the time for widespread full acceptance and implementation of PLM using another approach.

Just to be clear what I'm talking about, here's the [Definition of PLM](#) .... *Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) is the business activity of managing, in the most effective way, a company's products all the way across their lifecycles; from the very first idea for a product all the way through until it is retired and disposed of*.

I estimated that before someone could change a company to the PLM way, they would need to have worked at least 10 years in industry. And they'd need maybe 5 to 10 years to change the company. But, before that, they would have needed to be taught by a teacher or professor who had even more experience of PLM in industry. Yet, even in 2016, only a handful of universities world-wide offer PLM courses.

Assume that:

- by 2020 PLM is widely taught in universities,
- depending on the country, students take 3 to 6 years to get their degrees,
- 10 years are needed to get significant experience in industry and to rise to a position from which someone can make sure the company works the PLM way

From which it looks as if widespread full acceptance and implementation of PLM won't come before the 2030s.

Some readers may be thinking, "Is he crazy? Will PLM seriously take another 15 years to become the norm?"

Well, we're now in 2016, and PLM emerged in 2001. That was 15 years ago. So, I would ask them, "In view of progress to date, do you seriously believe it's possible for PLM to achieve widespread full acceptance and implementation before 2030?"

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The original article is located on the LinkedIn web site.
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