ABI RESEARCH COMPETITIVE RANKING

QMS SOFTWARE

Rockwell Automation | PLEX

OVERALL: 78.8 | INNOVATION: 69.0 | IMPLEMENTATION: 87.5 | RANK: 5

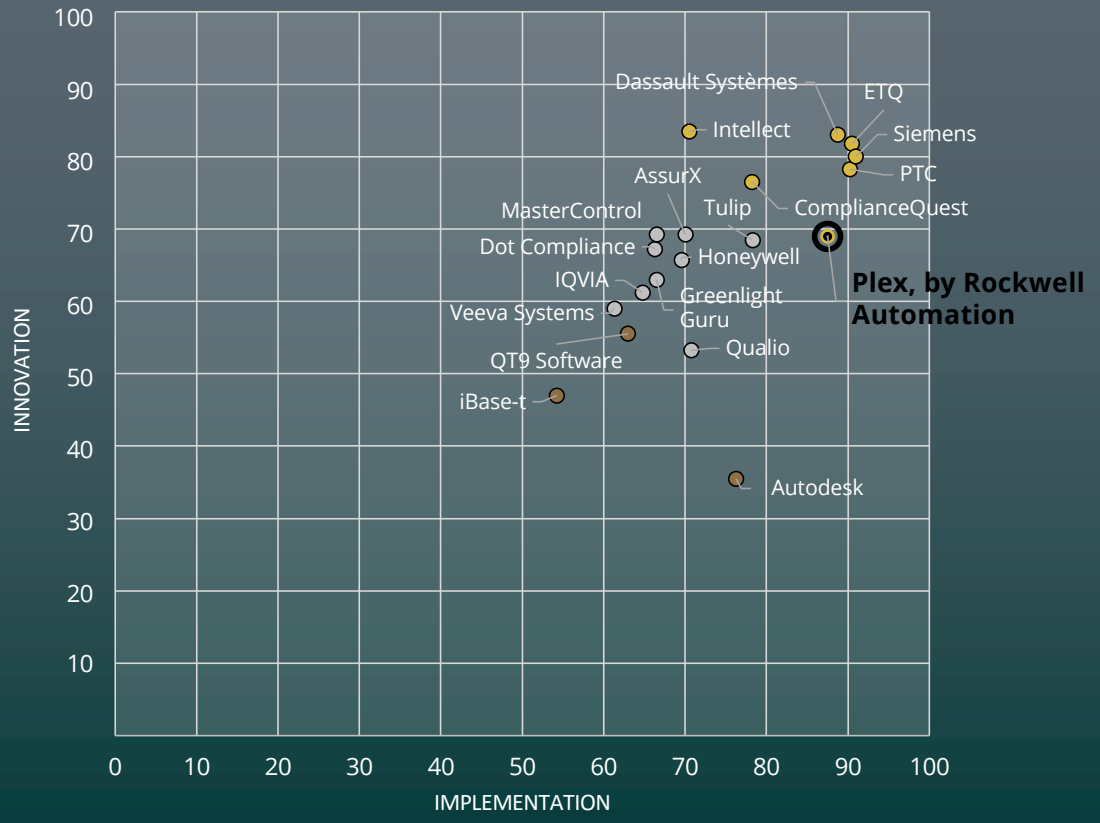
PLEX by ROCKWELL AUTOMATION

LEADER ABIresearch.

TOP IMPLEMENTER ABIresearch.

OVERALL: 76.6 | INNOVATION: 69.0 | IMPLEMENTATION: 87.5 | RANK: 5

INNOVATION *VERSUS* IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX



INNOVATION

PLEX by ROCKWELL AUTOMATION

INNOVATION SCORE: 69.0

Acquired in 2021 by Rockwell Automation for US$2.2 billion, the Plex Smart Manufacturing Platform provides manufacturers with a wide range of enterprise software functionality across ERP, MES, SCP, Asset Performance Management (APM), and QMS solutions. Plex QMS is supported not only by Plex's associated software solutions, but also by Rockwell Automation's comprehensive software and hardware ecosystem, allowing Rockwell to effectively support a manufacturer's production process. The software provides extensive traceability and transparency at the component level to maintain and manage quality, with this functionality significantly enhanced when used in conjunction with the rest of the solution's MES and ERP functionality.

The software has strong low-code supported functionality, including both the VisionPlex tool that allows customers to create custom screens, dashboards, and application functionality, and the Flexible Workflow Module that enables manufacturers to build workflow approvals and notifications in a simple outline format.

The company's Supplier QMS option, which can be leveraged as a standalone option, or in conjunction with Plex Advanced QMS, contains a wide range of supplier management functionality, including supplier PPAP, part specification oversight, and administrative features.

Whilst still in the piloting and test phase of it's the development of its AI functionality, Plex QMS is focusing its initial capabilities around Corrective Action and Root Cause that considers data across environment, people, product, & process to both determine root cause and likewise, drive corrective action.

IMPLEMENTATION

PLEX by ROCKWELL AUTOMATION

IMPLEMENTATION SCORE: 87.5

Plex QMS is a cloud-native, multi-tenant, SaaS platform that serves manufacturing markets across a wide range of both discrete and process industries, helping manufacturers meet all key global compliance and regulatory bodies' standards and requirements such as ISO 9001, IATF 16949, ISO 22000, Food Safety System Certification (FSSC) 22000, FMEA, and the FDA's Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP). Plex QMS has very competitive deployment experience compared to other vendors assessed, with the solution also augmented with very strong partnerships to support deployment and technology features (Microsoft and Cognite for AI). The software has comprehensive Open APIs, allowing customers to simply connect the platform to plant floor equipment and existing third-party enterprise software.

Plex QMS offers the full range of QMS functionality, which can be broken down into different tiers depending on a company's specific needs, including Core QMS, Advanced QMS, Supplier QMS, and Total QMS. Manufacturers can easily scale up their deployments to multiple sites, with Plex utilizing an enterprise framework model that creates a series of templates with common processes, allowing for easy user adoption and simpler deployment at additional locations and lines.

The QMS' functionality is supported by a wide range of OOTB templates that can be tailored to fit customers' specific requirements. The platform's modular approach enables manufacturers to target specific challenges even further, with customers able to just access the elements they need at the start and then scale up as they digitally mature. Furthermore, the industry-specific templates allow manufacturers to focus on configuration, rather than customization, reducing the upfront time investment in deploying a new solution.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

PLEX by ROCKWELL AUTOMATION

Plex QMS software is closely integrated with the wider MES and ERP capabilities of Rockwell Automation, creating a strong overarching software solution portfolio that manufacturers can leverage to create E2E digital threads and support effective quality management. Rockwell's primary strength was found in its implementation scoring, with the company ranking fifth overall due to its highly competitive customer base and deployment experience, alongside a comprehensive partnership ecosystem, rapid time to value, and easy scaling of deployments. Plex QMS' overall scoring was most predominantly held back by the solution's weaker innovation scoring with a lack of any truly innovative quality-focused functionality and no quality-based AI capabilities. The solution's primary challenge is that it currently feels more like an MES and ERP product first and a QMS solution second, with this distinction being more noticeable for the Rockwell Automation software than other similar market competitors.


CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY

VENDOR MATRIX

Methodology: After individual scores are established for innovation and implementation, an overall company score is established using the Root Mean Square (RMS) method:

$$Score = \sqrt{\frac{innovation^2 + implementation^2}{2}}$$

The resulting overall scores are then ranked and used for percentile comparisons.

The RMS method, in comparison with a straight summation or average of individual innovation and implementation values, rewards companies for standout performances.

For example, using this method, a company with an innovation score of nine and an implementation score of one would score considerably higher than a company with a score of five in both areas, despite the mean score being the same. ABI Research believes that this is appropriate as the goal of these matrices is to highlight those companies that stand out from the others.

RANKING CRITERIA

Leader: A company that receives a score of **75 or above** for its overall ranking

Mainstream: A company that receives scores **between 60 and 75** for its overall ranking

Follower: A company that receives a score of **60 or below** for its overall ranking

Innovation Leader: A company that receives a score of **75 or above** for its innovation ranking.

Implementation Leader: A company that receives a score of **75 or above** for its implementation ranking.

INNOVATION CRITERIA

Product Capabilities: What unique features does the MES solution offer? Does it include AI functionality? Does the solution effectively set itself apart from competitors?

Data Visibility, Accessibility, and Security: Is the software available over the cloud? Is it cloud native? Can data be remotely leveraged and be viewed across plants to support enterprise-wide collaboration? Are the data contextualized to meet different users' needs within the organization? Can manufacturers leverage AI to analyze the data? Does the solution meet and exceed required security standards such as ISO 27001 and IEC-62443?

User Experience and Worker Augmentation: Does the software have low/no-code functionality? Can customers generate comprehensive reports? Can screens be customized to be operator-specific, showing only relevant information to the user? Does the MES have an embedded AI chatbot to support workers?

Building a Digital Thread: Is there an extensive enterprise software ecosystem or portfolio to support the MES software? Does the QMS include supplier management functionality? Does this functionality have any unique features?

IMPLEMENTATION CRITERIA

Bookings and Customer Base: How many global installations does the vendor support? How many different customers does the vendor have? Does the vendor demonstrate a growing customer base?

Time to Value: How much of the solution can be accessed OOTB? Does the software allow for easy and rapid scalability? Can the solution be deployed as SaaS? Does it have comprehensive integration capabilities?

Partnerships: Does the software vendor work extensively with System Integrators (SIs) and market partners? Does it have any notable AI-focused partnerships?

Support for SMEs: How well does the company's solution effectively support smaller-scale manufacturers?

Regulatory and Standards Compliance: Does the solution help manufacturers effectively meet their given markets' regulatory and compliance requirements? Does the software provide coverage to meet standards across different countries?

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