



# PLM in a Fortnight

> One data management product aimed at small- to mid-sized manufacturers promises full implementation in just two weeks.

BY NANCY ROUSE-TALLEY

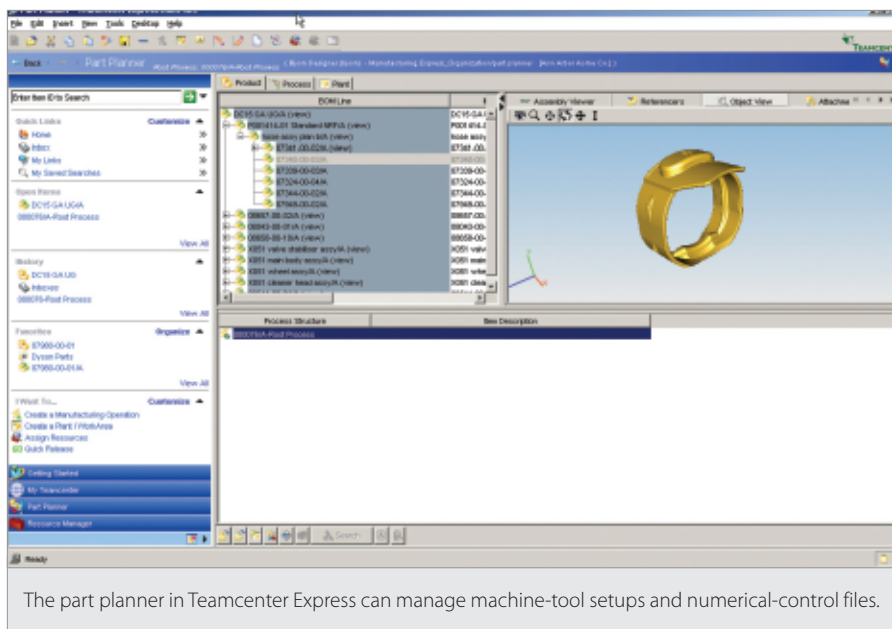
Success stories in the realm of engineering product lifecycle management (PLM) are as rare as documented sightings of Sasquatch or the Loch Ness Monster. Everyone talks about them, but no one can really say they have actually seen or experienced one.

PLM has become such an easy target, in fact, that some high-level executives at CAD companies feel free to criticize the entire concept as well as the companies that have promoted it. Autodesk CEO Carl Bass delivered a shot across the bows of entrenched PLM companies such as PTC, Dassault Systemes, and Siemens PLM Software Inc. (formerly UGS) when he characterized PLM as an “artifact, a marketing slogan, to satisfy a financial community.” (see “Is There Life After PLM?” October 2007 DE.)

Is it any wonder that most small and mid-sized manufacturers avoid PLM? The thought of spending millions for a data-management system that might never work is enough to scare off even the most entrepreneurial of spirits.

## A NEW APPROACH

A product from Siemens PLM Software, Teamcenter Express, might provide the



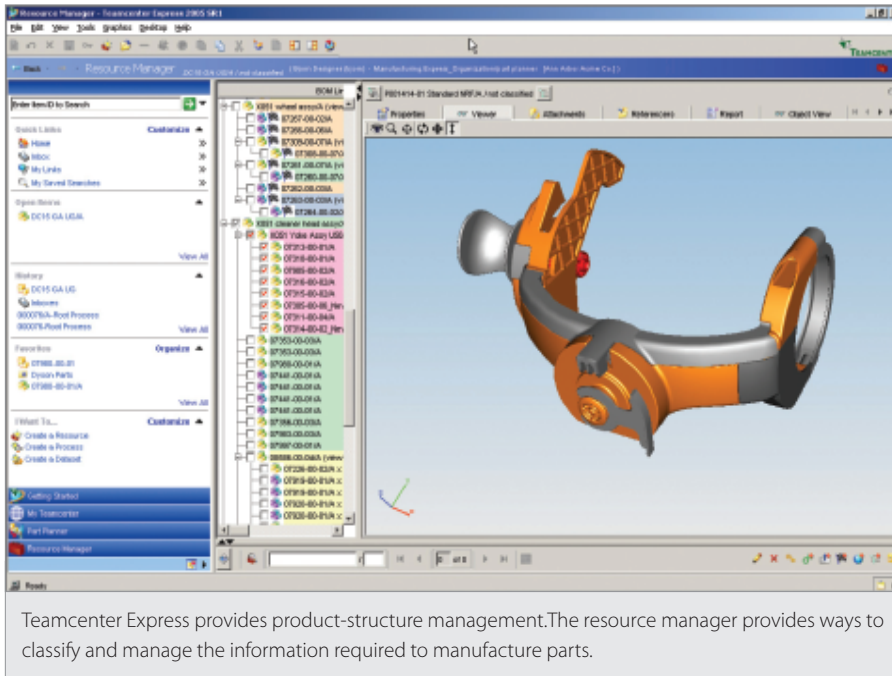
cost-effective engineering data management that is needed by small and mid-sized manufacturers. Siemens guarantees that companies can implement Teamcenter Express at a single site in 10 working days. The software uses the best practices for data and change management that Siemens developed during years of implementing PLM at large manufacturing concerns such as automotive and aerospace companies.

“We looked at the kinds of issues the mid-market was dealing with as well as what we had to do to make PLM more appealing to companies with five to 50 engineers,” said Bruce Boes, vice-president of UGS Velocity Series marketing. “We found

that the mid-market is facing fundamentally the same issues as larger companies— globalization, time-to-market, project management, and collaboration.”

Smaller companies need PLM because they are dealing with an explosion of data caused by moving from 2D to 3D CAD. Plus, many mid-market companies are designing more complex products than they were in the past.

A factor that makes it difficult for small companies to implement engineering-data management is a lack of documented processes. “Most of the time the process is in someone’s head. These smaller companies just do not have the time or money to formally document what they do.”



Teamcenter Express provides product-structure management. The resource manager provides ways to classify and manage the information required to manufacture parts.

What's more, small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs) have limited training budgets and IT staffs, so any software they use must be relatively easy to understand and maintain. In addition, a big differentiator between small and large companies is their willingness to take risks.

"Larger companies almost don't care about price because they can save so much money by solving the problem," said Boes. "Smaller companies have budgets. They are much more risk adverse and are concerned about total cost of ownership, including purchase price, maintenance, implementation, and ongoing support."

### WHO USES TEAMCENTER?

There are no typical customers for Teamcenter Express. The solution serves a broader base of manufacturing customers than were typically handled by traditional PLM. In addition to auto, aerospace, and equipment manufacturers, Teamcenter Express is attracting high-technology and consumer-products firms, electronics manufacturers, tool and mold makers, and contract design and manufacturing companies.

Integrated DNA Technologies (IDT) of Coralville, IA, is a typical non-traditional customer using Teamcenter Express. IDT is the largest U.S. manufacturer of oligonucleotides, which are small strands of DNA. The company is using Teamcenter Express to improve its design and document control processes to support its ISO 9001 quality program, said Bob Schafbuch,

IDT's assistant vice president of information systems.

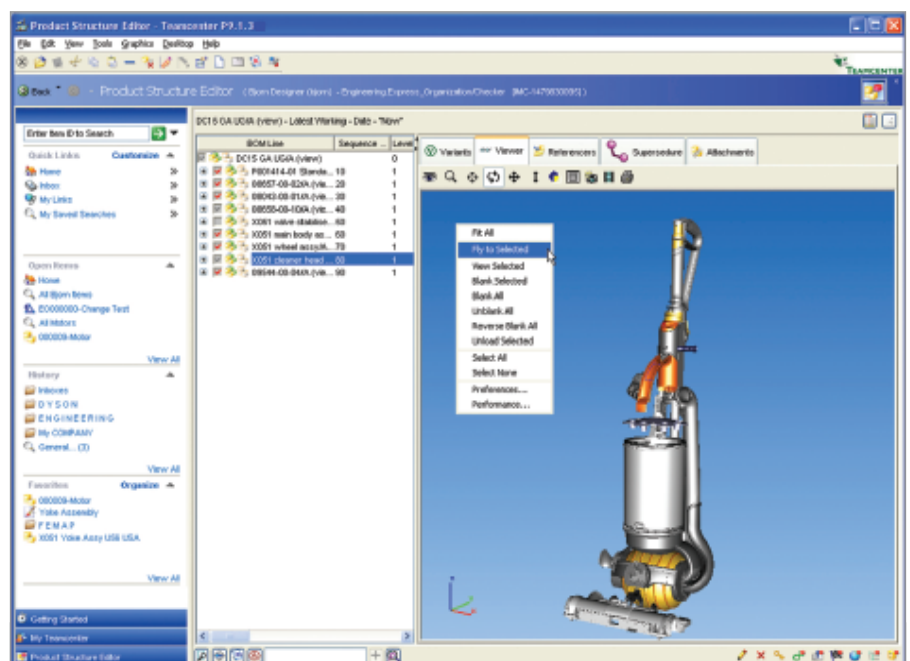
Before implementing Teamcenter Express, IDT used another UGS Velocity Series program, Solid Edge. Schafbuch said a major driver for using Teamcenter Express was that it met the company's immediate requirements, but could be upgraded as the company's needs grew. In the future, IDT's purchasing department

as well as its internal and external suppliers may access information in Teamcenter Express to improve turnaround time for customers.

### INSIDE TEAMCENTER EXPRESS

Teamcenter Express includes three major modules, all sold via named-user licenses. Its Author software, used primarily by engineers, offers a vault with check-in and check-out capabilities, supports multiple MCAD integrations including Solid Edge, and provides product-structure management. The Professional module, which is designed for use by engineering managers, manufacturing planners, and engineering system administrators, offers access to product data and structures as well as 3D visualization and markup. The Consumer module is used by purchasing agents, office administrators, and marketing managers. It allows users to query the database, view and print files, and participate in work processes identified in the system.

Other modules of Teamcenter Express are similar to the core modules. Instead of handling CAD data, for example, one module manages manufacturing information such as data from UGS Velocity Series' NX CAM Express. Another module allows release of engineering information such as bills of material to ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems.



A product structure editor supports revision-based product configuration, bill-of-material editing, and reporting and assembly visualization.

In addition to providing ways for customers to vault data, configure processes, and manage the product structure, Teamcenter Express lets users associate data to specific projects. It also provides additional capability for capturing parameter data such as diameter, weight, and material associated with parts or manufacturing resources.

According to Boes, one of the most important benefits of Teamcenter Express is that it offers a growth path to customers. Other engineering-data management solutions tend to focus on either small customers or large ones. "We're one of the few companies that can scale a solution from one person to thousands," said Boes.

In addition to offering two-week implementation for customers using a single CAD system, predefined workflows and change management practices in

Teamcenter Express also make the system easier to deploy. Teamcenter Express, because it can be implemented so quickly, is competitive with ASP solutions that store customer data off-site.

Boes said that Siemens does not plan on adding significant functionality to Teamcenter Express. "The biggest mistake we see [in PLM] is people biting off more than they can chew. They [get] themselves into 30-, 60-, or 90-day implementations that they originally wanted to avoid," said Boes. Adding more functions to Teamcenter Express might encourage increases in project scope that add cost. ■

*Contributing Editor Nancy Rouse-Talley writes on technology subjects, including product lifecycle management, computer-aided design, and engineering. You can send Rouse-Talley your thoughts on this article c/o DE-Editors@deskeng.com.*

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