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Bob Schafbuch
Assistant Vice President of
Enterprise Applications
Integrated DNA Technologies Inc.

Tighter design control needed

About four years ago, when IDT's engineering team was using Autodesk Inventor as its CAD system, IDT decided to pursue ISO certification (the company has since achieved it). This raised the requirements for design and document control. “The engineering team had been fairly freelance about its design and document control prior to that,” explains Schafbuch. The company tried a version control application, but “it just did not work for design engineers; it was more for software developers,” he says.

“We needed a version control system for CAD and other types of files such as Office documents,” Schafbuch continues. The company also wanted the system to be lightweight and easy to use. Because the engineering team was using Inventor at the time, they initially looked at product data management (PDM) options from Autodesk. “We did not have the comfort level with the products Autodesk provided,” Schafbuch says. “But we were really impressed with Siemens' PDM Software, mainly Solid Edge Insight and SharePoint design management system.

IDT made the decision to switch to the Solid Edge® CAD solution and implement Insight for design management. This met the company's PDM needs, but as market conditions forced the company to find ways to further reduce lead times, management realized that more PDM capabilities, such as collaboration tools and engineering process management controls, were needed. “Solid Edge Insight was successful, but when we realized we needed more functionality, we started looking at Teamcenter Express,” Schafbuch says.

CAD-PDM connection boosts re-use

The Teamcenter® Express solution, also from Siemens, is a pre-configured, full-featured collaborative PDM system. With Teamcenter Express, IDT gained the additional functionality it needed, as well as seamless integration with Solid Edge. “The Solid Edge Embedded Client is an incredible asset in Teamcenter Express,” says Schafbuch. “It allows designers to create and modify Solid Edge documents directly in Teamcenter Express, which offers flexibility in our design process. It also means that we easily capture Solid Edge data for re-use in future projects without placing an additional burden on the CAD user.”

IDT has implemented Teamcenter Express across its entire design team. Other stakeholders within the company, such as purchasing, the internal machine shop and maintenance, also use Teamcenter Express. In this way, all product data is managed within a single system that includes Office documents as well as CAD data. IDT also uses Teamcenter Express to manage five workflows related to the status of an item (such as prototype, release, revise, obsolete and discontinue).



Solutions/Services

Teamcenter Express
www.siemens.com/plm/
teamcenterexpress

Solid Edge
www.siemens.com/solidedge

Client's primary business

Integrated DNA Technologies is the largest supplier of custom nucleic acids in the United States.
www.idtdna.com

Client location

Coralville
Iowa

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One key benefit of Teamcenter Express is better information access company-wide, which translates into less time spent on the part of the engineering team providing information to other stakeholders. “Our mantra is to provide the right information to the right people at the right time,” Schafbuch explains. “With Teamcenter Express, our design team doesn’t have to provide this information, people can self-serve. So the design team spends more time designing.”

“Those internal stakeholders are our customers and they now have access to information and can provide valuable input as the machines are being designed,” Schafbuch says.

The biggest success, however, has been the ability to accelerate the machine design process through increased re-use of existing design data. “Since we installed Teamcenter Express, designers are leveraging existing work instead of starting from scratch. They are also sharing data across our three facilities, which wasn’t happening in the past,” adds Schafbuch. Overall, there’s better communication and collaboration throughout the company. “The real business value here is more efficient processes, such as getting items ordered more quickly because the right people have the right information,” he adds.

Teamcenter Express helped IDT gain ISO 9001 and ISO 1345 certification by allowing the engineering department to demonstrate adherence to the standards’ design and document control specifications. Teamcenter Express also positions IDT to move into new markets such as therapeutics for human and medical applications that fall under the purview of government agencies, such as the Food and Drug administration in the United States. “It will be much easier to meet the FDA’s documentation requirements now that we have Teamcenter Express,” Schafbuch notes. “This has been such a huge leap for us.”



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