Krebs Engineers beating competitors to the punch with CATIA, SMARTEAM

"We are not yet using SMARTEAM to its potential. We've just scratched the surface. It will allow us to respond more quickly and accurately to the client."
– Stuart Sandler, Director of Information Services, Krebs Engineers

Highlights

■ *Proliferating documents and an outmoded document handling system were causing Krebs Engineers to be slow in responding to customer inquiries and new business opportunities.*

■ *Krebs chose CATIA** Version 5 for 3D computer aided design (CAD) and SMARTEAM** to manage the documents created in CATIA and in the company's 2D CAD system.*

■ *Krebs expects CATIA and SMARTEAM to reduce its response time for most request for quotations (RFQs) from weeks to days and increase the percentage of business it wins.*

Timely response to RFQs key to win

Krebs Engineers of Tucson, Arizona, has no doubt it makes the best products in its business. Its slurry pump line, called the millMAX, has been documented to cut energy consumption by 20 percent or more over its major competitors, and its patented design increases wear life by as much as 40 percent – a major benefit in such a complex, costly product.

Krebs is also a leading supplier of centrifugal separators, also known as hydrocyclones. These highly specialised machines separate slurry mixtures by density. Krebs hydrocyclones can be found in mining, pulp and paper, chemical, pollution control, power generation, dairy, car wash and wastewater treatment applications, among others.

Krebs knows that having the best products isn't always enough. To be perceived as the leader, a company must deliver more than quality. It also must deliver speed. "If we can respond to a customer request faster and more completely than our competitors, we become the company to beat," says Stuart Sandler, Krebs' Director of Information Services. "When you're first, everyone gets compared to you. And if you're first and best, no one else can overtake you."

Central data key to RFQ speed

Sandler's instinct is confirmed by recent research from CIMdata. In a report titled 'Product Lifecycle Management: Improving Top Line Performance of Industrial Equipment Manufacturers', the strategic consultancy observes "the ability to develop more rapid and accurate

responses to sourcing opportunities can increase your percentage of winning bids, adding to your revenue."

Krebs Engineers knew it needed to focus more on the customised needs of its customers. By spending too much time searching for documents, Sales Engineers often were unable to respond for as much as a week. To reclaim that time, Krebs chose a combination of CATIA Version 5 for 3D CAD and SMARTEAM to manage its product design and document files.

KREBS ENGINEERS

Big company power, small company price

As part of its SMARTEAM project, Krebs plans to implement SMARTEAM Web Editor, which will enable the company to collaborate on and share product information among its various offices over the Internet using standard Web browsers. The entire system runs on Microsoft** Windows**, making it affordable and easy to install and learn.

"Perhaps what's most amazing is we are using solutions that until recently only mega-corporations with huge budgets could afford to buy and implement," said Mark Holmberg, Engineering Processes Manager at Krebs. "The time, resources and expertise required were typically beyond the reach of small and medium-size companies due to cost and complexity in programming. But with SMARTEAM, we implemented and performed our legacy data conversion literally overnight."
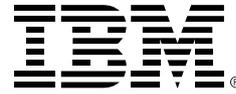
Integration equals effective collaboration

Krebs was impressed by SMARTEAM's powerful search and document management capabilities, and its ability to manage documents created in CATIA, other CAD programs, Microsoft Office and Adobe Acrobat.

With SMARTEAM linked to the Internet, Sandler said, "Krebs hopes to be able to respond to virtually any customer RFQ within 24 – 48 hours, including a complete design, accompanying documentation and even a case study or two to prove the operating advantages of the company's products."

"This tight integration is critical to us and is one of the reasons we selected CATIA and SMARTEAM," Holmberg said, adding that integration will significantly improve the accuracy of bill of material (BOM) data. "One of the key factors in the selection process was the ODBC compliance of the SMARTEAM product," Sandler added. "By using ODBC, it makes it easier to integrate the BOM management with our existing ERP system."

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