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Business in Focus:

Burner Systems International

Improving Collaboration with Product Data Management (PDM)

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This summary is an abbreviated version of the report and does not contain the full content. A link to download the full report is available on the Tech-Clarity website, www.tech-clarity.com.

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Introducing the Scenario

Burner Systems faced a common scenario for small- to mid-sized manufacturers. Like many smaller companies they compete based on agility. Time to market is critical due to intense competition and demand from OEMs that redesign their own products every year. "*Our market is very competitive, and we needed to speed up our product development timeline*," explained BSI's Frost. "*Time to market is extremely important. We have lots of competitors, and the OEMs are always looking for something new. We have to redesign just to keep their business*."

Our market is very competitive, and we needed to speed up
our product development timeline.
Tim Frost, VP Global Product Development, BSI

The adoption of solid modeling techniques helped drive efficiency and speed, but also contributed to increased complexity. With solid modeling, the drawings can have any number of files behind the scenes and the number of files managed grows exponentially. Managing these files and their interrelationships on local hard drives or in shared folders is very difficult. As Mr. Frost explains, "*You can use folders and you might get away with it for a while, but with multiple revisions you can't manage it*."

BSI's growth through acquisition also resulted in increased complexity. "*We ended up with plants all over the globe, and we had to integrate engineering functions and data*." Acquisitions also led to the need to handle multiple CAD systems, including legacy data from Autodesk, Pro/Engineer, and SolidWorks in addition to their primary tool, Solid Edge. The combined business now has over one hundred product development projects active at any one time, further compounding the complexity.

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of their design and manufacturing environment.

BSI needed to address the complexity of their design and manufacturing environment. But perhaps one of the biggest opportunities for Burner Systems was to expand collaboration across departments to improve product development speed and reduce downstream issues. "*Our previous PDM system was only in Engineering, we needed to break out to the rest of the business,*" Frost said. BSI committed to improving their product development process and the supporting PDM system.

Conclusion

Burner Systems had to address the complexities of the engineering and manufacturing environment of their growing business. Solid product data management is critical to managing this complexity. "*You either have a PDM system or you need to get one,*" explains Frost. "*If you aren't there, you need to get there as fast as you can. It is virtually impossible to control and manage the volume of CAD data without it. If you layer on the complexity of multiple locations, multiple CAD systems, design collaboration across the globe, and a desire to manage and coordinate non-CAD data – the job is simply impossible without a good PDM system.*"

They also recognized the need to improve product development speed, and the importance of involving others from outside of Engineering. As Frost asks, "*Why wouldn't you want Purchasing & Manufacturing see the information, why would you keep it where nobody can get at it?*"

> ***The new system has shrunk cycle times and helped them make fewer manufacturing errors that can cost up to $100,000 each.***

BSI recognized the need to move to a scalable solution to handle their global business. "*Our old PDM was always in Engineering, and remote viewing via the web was a disaster,*" Frost commented. The new system has shrunk cycle times and helped them make fewer manufacturing errors that can cost up to $100,000 each. "*We know that we are faster in developing new products, I would estimate 25% faster,*" Frost explains. "*We know that we are better prepared for launching production due to better input and collaboration from Manufacturing, and we know that we are less likely to make bad parts due to out of date drawing revisions.*"

Burner Systems International is enjoying the benefits of their new PDM system, but they are not stopping there. They recognize the strategic value of what they have put in place, and the potential for even greater value as they grow with it.

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About the Author

Jim Brown is the President and founder of Tech-Clarity, and has over 20 years of experience in application software for the manufacturing industries. He has a broad background including roles in industry, management consulting, the software industry and research spanning enterprise applications such as PLM and ERP.

About the Business

Burner Systems International (BSI) is a leading global supplier of components, assemblies and system solutions for the gas appliance industry. With six facilities operating in five countries, the company serves a broad spectrum of OEM's dedicated to gas-fueled cooking and heating appliances.