

Majenta PLM provides training and support for interior design company that adopts Solid Edge to improve quality and efficiency



Sheffield Sustainable Kitchens



Industry

Bespoke Kitchen
Designers/Installers

Business challenges

- Improve efficiency and make best use of design time
- Effective logistics

Keys to success

- Library of parts
- Extensive reuse of data
- Convincing visualisations

Ensuring that 'Sustainable' is more than just a name

You may have seen Sheffield Sustainable Kitchens on television and not even realised it, for the company provided the hi-tech sustainable kitchen that featured in the 2012 UK national television Channel 4 documentary series Home of the Future. As Rob Cole, Director, explains, "The series featured a family from Sheffield who have their lives transformed by cutting-edge technology, giving them a taste of how we all might be living the future."

Sheffield Sustainable Kitchens designs and installs custom-built kitchens in and around the City of Sheffield and The Peak District National Park. In business for just five years, the company has already been successful in winning a Sheffield City Council Digital Direction scheme award. Rob Cole again, "Our success depends on us doing the right thing for our customers. To qualify for the word 'sustainable', we do our utmost to be energy efficient. We use board made of 98% recycled materials for our cabinets and use our best endeavours to source timber locally to produce something that is well designed, going to last and won't need replacing in a few years time."

The challenge of customising with efficiency

Rob Cole describes the company's biggest business challenges as the need to make best use of time and to manage logistics effectively. "Our big push is on efficiency and CAD is a vital part of that so I looked at some dedicated kitchen design software but it was too hard to create bespoke components and units."



Solution

Provision of Solid Edge with customised training and technical support from Majenta PLM

Business impact

- Kitchen design time down from almost two days to less than one
- Time from quote to order reduced by approximately 25%
- Volume of quotes supplied up by more than 300% on the previous year
- Better rendering enables customers to make quicker and better informed buying decisions
- Clarity for kitchen fitters cuts down on queries and saves time and money on site

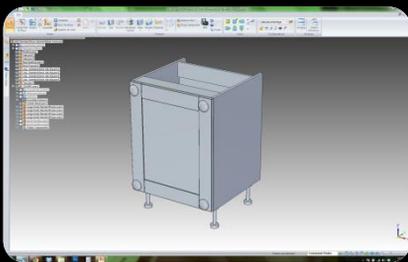
Then Luke Wawrzyniak joined the company as a CAD technician. Having studied Furniture Design and Making at Sheffield Hallam University he had used SolidWorks. Cole continues, “We’d had an early version of this in the past and we’d spent a day at a SolidWorks reseller looking at it but to be honest, we didn’t get on with it. We then heard of Solid Edge through another local company who pointed us in the direction of Majenta PLM. We received such helpful, informative guidance from Majenta PLM that after further research and some discussion with other users we decided that Solid Edge was the right solution for us.”

Funded by Sheffield’s Digital Directions scheme, tailored on-site training was provided by one of Majenta PLM’s specialists. Two days of intensive hands-on training was followed by a period of consolidation using Solid Edge then a third day of training on site.

Solid Edge enables speed

As Wawrzyniak points out, “With Solid Edge, the time it takes me to create a design is down from almost two days to less than one. That means it’s also faster for Rob to produce a quote and it’s a more accurate quote. It’s then so easy to make any changes the customer may want. This is in part because we can make global changes such as trying different handles or doors at the click of a mouse. We are also implementing new software to manage the pricing up element of our quotes and because Solid Edge will feed directly into this we expect to cut our pricing time in half.”

The reuse of data is immensely important to the company. According to Wawrzyniak it is the single most important contribution to improved efficiency and the company has built up an extensive library of parts that is growing with every job. “I can, for example, build up a door, enter some design rules and make it variable. To use it, all I need to do is bring it into the design and enter a couple of dimensions to make a new door size. The door pattern, number and size of panel changes according to the design rules.”



“Majenta PLM’s technical experts have always paid attention to what we want to be able to do and how we want to do it. The technical support service they provide is fantastic; they always respond very quickly and handle our queries with patience and understanding. They provide us with very good value.”

Rob Cole, Director, Sheffield Sustainable Kitchens

He explains that it can take up to an hour to model a fully dimensionally accurate and complex kitchen appliance. When there are multiple appliances to fit, he can save several hours design time by re-using and modifying an appliance already in the library. “We can also create a dimensionally accurate appliance, an oven for example, that is built to look right, then attach material properties, render it and add it to the library. I can then bring it in to a kitchen design pre-rendered.”

Components can also be stored in the library based on the most frequent colour that is requested. “That means we don’t have to go round every element of a particular kitchen, attach materials to each item and then render everything at once. This pre-rendering saves a lot of time and we can still change the colour if we want.”

An increase in quality and detail

Rob Cole again, “Our customers really like the quality and level of detail of our visualisations, compared to the quality of 3D renders produced by other kitchen suppliers. Potential customers can really see what a kitchen is going to look like before they place an order, right down to the lighting, the type of wood, toasters and kettles. It is much easier to sell a kitchen when the customer can see it and this has definitely cut down decision time and increased our sales rate. In addition, the final render from first click to completion takes just one minute. Solid Edge uses the CPU and the GPU to process the renders when others seem to use only the CPU. You could waste a lot of time that way.”

Fitting time is normally a week or two, and Solid Edge has been of great help in reducing fitting headaches, especially as most of the company’s projects involve older properties. “With the documentation from Solid Edge, the fitters now have a very clear picture of the installation. This saves organisational time as there is no need for one of us to be on site for each and every job.”



Improved quality across product, fitting, finish and service

Confirming the decision to adopt Solid Edge, Rob Coles sums up, "We supplied 31 quotes in the first quarter of this year when last year in the same period we managed to get just seven out. Our volume of quotes is up by more than 300% on the previous year, we simply couldn't have managed this before we moved to Solid Edge. We've reduced the time between quote and order by around 25% and customers are more able to make a decision based on the images we send them. The benefits we are getting are almost too many to quantify: product quality, fitting quality, finish quality and customer service quality."

Wawrzyniak adds "I like the way that Solid Edge holds your hand as you learn, walking you through new tools and processes. It is very easy to use despite the fact that it is also a really comprehensive product and when I do need to ask for assistance I just call Majenta PLM for the answer. My helpdesk contact has deep, technical knowledge and if he cannot answer a difficult question immediately he gets back to me within a few hours."

Cole concludes: "Majenta PLM's technical experts have always paid attention to what we want to be able to do and how we want to do it. The technical support service they provide is fantastic; they always respond very quickly and handle our queries with patience and understanding. They provide us with very good value."

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