

COMPONENT MANUFACTURER SCORES BIG WITH SECOND GENERATION CAD CATALOGUE

The Smalley Steel Ring Company manufactures spiral retaining rings and wave springs for a wide variety of precision applications in industrial, automotive and aerospace markets - including the Space Station.

Ken Massett, Marketing Manager at Smalley, explains their business challenges. "Our toughest communication job by far is helping potential customers understand our products, their uniqueness and their application."

SAVING CUSTOMER DESIGN TIME

As part of their application centered approach, Smalley began about five years ago to offer online CAD models of their products. "We offer over five thousand versions of our products. Customers want to be able to include our parts in their designs. Our job is to make that as easy as possible. We were looking for a way to get the people who express the choice in our products - design engineers - access to our data in a way that would save them time and also help showcase what is available," Massett noted.

FIRST GENERATION CATALOGUE EFFORT PROVIDES LESSONS LEARNED

"Our first catalogue relationship allowed us to get a feel for what online catalogues could offer us. And, what was important to us."

Smalley's original online catalogue, offered by a CAD vendor, included 2D data only. It limited customers to receive data in the few native CAD data formats used by the vendor's system along with some neutral formats like IGES. Apparently, this limited access to native data became the Achilles heel of the business.

"After a few years they informed us that they were going out of the catalogue business," Massett said, "so we began to look for a new vendor."

CHOOSING A NEW SOLUTION

"We learned from our experience with CAD vendor specific solutions. We considered a number of different options. Our first issue was to find a financially viable company, that was committed to the catalogue business and that really wanted to help us grow our business. Second, we looked for a company that could provide data in the formats our customers needed. Our first generation system taught us that 3D data, along with the ability to deliver in native format, was important to our customers." Massett explained.

THE PARTSOLUTIONS DIFFERENCE - A TOTAL RELATIONSHIP

As the Smalley management team became acquainted with PARTSolutions they could see a real difference from their previous high maintenance relationship.

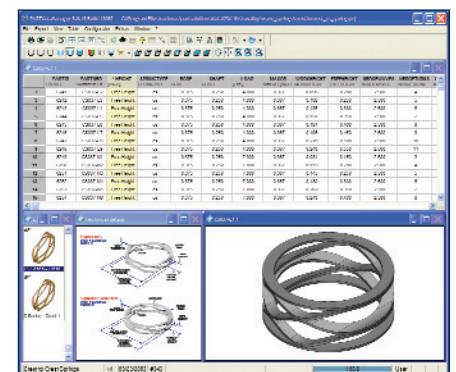
SMALLEY STEEL RING COMPANY

Headquartered in Lake Zurich, Illinois, Smalley Steel Ring Company is a privately held company which offers a highly unique set of spiral rings and wave springs which fit in tight radial space applications and maintain a uniform radial cross section with no gap. They reduce material cost due to their smaller assembly size.

Now in their second generation of providing customer access to online CAD data of their products, Smalley labels the now two year old relationship with PARTSolutions as a major boost to its marketing effort.

"Our customers really appreciate the opportunity to receive our CAD data. It saves them time. And, we get a clear picture of the active customers in our marketplace. We can see a clear relationship between downloads of a part number by a prospect and orders placed for that same part number."

Ken Massett
Marketing Manager
Smalley Steel Ring Company



Smalley's customers configure springs and rings via PARTSolutions websites as well as PARTSolutions enterprise applications. Native CAD data is provided to the user.

- BUSINESS VALUE**
- Internal support costs for customer CAD models 100% eliminated
 - Improved customer value due to design time savings
 - Hard data about customers and prospects that is traceable to orders

"My focus is marketing. I don't want to become a CAD expert. I wanted somebody to take full charge of the catalogue for me. I wanted to give them the data that they need and let them handle it. I don't know what version of AutoCAD LT® or Pro/ENGINEER® we should support. I expect my vendor to know that."

A PARTNER WITH A PLAN

PARTsolutions took complete charge of the implementation to deliver the Smalley catalogue on the web in over 85 CAD and graphic formats.

"I was impressed with their technical knowledge on how to deliver CAD data to satisfy customers. It was only a matter of months before PARTsolutions had our catalogue of all 5,000 parts online for us," Massett said. "They linked it up with the robust search capability on our website to deliver a top notch solution. The implementation went very smoothly."

SAVING TIME - REDUCING INTERRUPTIONS

After working with PARTsolutions for over two years Massett easily defined the key business benefits of the partnership.

"First of all, PARTsolutions has saved us time. The time and cost of supporting CAD drawings has dropped to zero compared to our first generation. We don't have a ton of customers calling and e-mailing to tell us the drawing isn't right or 'it's not what I need.' In the past this required our constant attention. And, when a customer calls you've got to drop everything and jump on it now. You can't do it two weeks later. Now, it just runs and works really well without my involvement. I don't have a lot of things that work that way."

POSITIVE CUSTOMER RESPONSE

"Another important benefit has been the feedback I receive from our sales force," Massett offered. "They're continually passing on to me that customers are thanking them and telling them how much they value having accurate, up-to-date CAD data available online. They really seem to like the ability to rotate a shaded image to view the design before they receive the download."

GENERATING ACTIVE LEADS

"By far the most valuable outcome, however, is that the system provides hard data about the people who are actively specifying our products. We can see a clear relationship between downloads of a part number by a prospect and orders placed for that same part number," Massett noted.

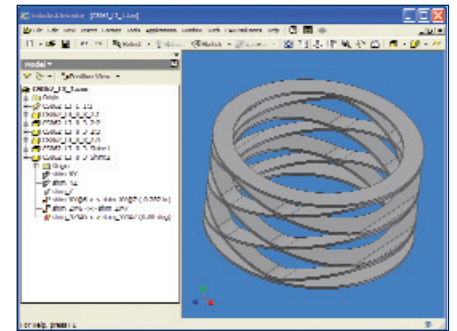
"We actively follow up those leads because we know they are real. There is no question the number of total leads we have available to us for follow-up has increased because PARTsolutions represents a completely new stream of leads."

DRIVES REVENUE WITH LESS HASSLE AND LOWER COST

"PARTsolutions offers an effective service that drives business for us, provides information about our marketplace and customers and saves me time," Massett concluded.

"I really like the way our relationship with PARTsolutions has continued to evolve. Other vendors wanted to sign us up, get us going and move on. With PARTsolutions they are always improving their offering and helping us to take advantage of those improvements. They keep updating my site with improvements. We're in the process of rolling out a new approach to allow customers to define the spring height in their drawing. I'm sure they're going to find this really valuable. This is great because I don't have the time to continually prospect for new ways to improve this process. I like it when my vendor calls and lets me know of new ideas that strengthen our offering."

Ken Massett
Marketing Manager
Smalley Steel Ring Company



This Smalley spring was configured in PARTsolutions and placed directly into this Autodesk Inventor® design as a native Inventor part, with history.



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