

# SMC CORPORATION OF AMERICA

## DRIVING PNEUMATIC SALES VIA CONFIGURABLE MODEL DOWNLOADS WITH 3D CONTENTCENTRAL



By making configurable model downloads available through the 3D ContentCentral online 3D catalog service and its own website, SMC has capitalized on the trend toward online 3D catalogs for selecting and ordering pneumatic components, resulting in a 10 to 15 percent boost in web traffic each year, an increased number of leads, and sales growth.



### **Challenge:**

Distribute configurable 3D CAD models of pneumatic components in popular file formats for download to meet customer and prospect expectations, and easily, efficiently and cost-effectively generate leads from model downloads to grow sales.

### **Solution:**

Implement the 3D ContentCentral Premium supplier model download service to cost-effectively expand web presence, generate leads, and drive sales.

### **Results:**

- Expanded web traffic 10 to 15 percent each year
- Enabled total daily model downloads of 5,000 to 6,000
- Increased additional model downloads of 5 to 15 percent with 3DCC
- Grew sales through greater number of higher quality leads

The world leader in pneumatics, SMC Corporation provides industry with the technologies and products it needs to support automated manufacturing. The Japanese corporation's US subsidiary, SMC Corporation of America, produces a wide range of pneumatic components, such as cylinders, actuators, regulators, and valves, for the North American market. Before the rise of ecommerce, much of SMC's business—like other component manufacturers—derived from paper catalogs, from which customers, primarily designers and engineers, could select and order pneumatic components for use in their assembly and machine designs. However, SMC had no good way to track who was interested in which products, and updating the catalogs to reflect the latest product range was a mammoth undertaking.

With the dawn of the digital age, the paper catalog paradigm was no longer sufficient for generating component leads and sales. Designers and engineers wanted to download component models for inclusion in their designs, and component manufacturers were asked to provide them. As an early adopter of 3D design technology—SMC standardized on the SOLIDWORKS® 3D platform in 1998—the company embraced the online 3D catalog concept. In 2000, SMC collaborated with Dassault Systèmes [DS] SOLIDWORKS to develop a service for configuring and downloading component models online.

"We briefly looked at other solutions to support our online 3D catalog, but we determined that working directly with [DS] SOLIDWORKS would provide a better solution for our audience," recalls Project Coordinator Steve Hoffer. "We made that decision and haven't looked back. [DS] SOLIDWORKS allowed us to create assemblies faster and with greater levels of detail and accuracy."

In 2001, the partnership resulted in a catalog service that evolved into the 3D ContentCentral® (3DCC) supplier model download service, which currently provides component manufacturers with access to more than 1.5 million engineers and product designers worldwide. Since SMC's download site went live, the company has continued to work with [DS] SOLIDWORKS and software consultant Technicon to provide online access to configurable models on SMC's website as well as through 3DCC.

"Because of our early involvement with SOLIDWORKS and the way that our catalog was implemented, SMC hosts our own models and uses a configuration tool provided by Technicon," Hoffer explains. "This system was integrated into 3D ContentCentral through a collaborative effort between Technicon, [DS] SOLIDWORKS, and SMC. With the 3D ContentCentral Premium service, we currently have 625 GB of CAD models available for download through both sites, which keeps our customers happy and our website fast."

### **INCREASING MODEL DOWNLOADS BOOSTS SALES**

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**"Customers rave about our CAD model downloads, and many won't even consider using a competitor's component if they can't download the model. 3D ContentCentral is an important contributor to our lead generation function, especially because we can support and maintain the system without a lot of engineering resources."**

—Brad Weedon, Online Marketing Manager



Weedon, this approach has increased web traffic on SMC's website by 10 to 15 percent each year, increased the number of leads generated, and grown sales.

"Today, we have 50,000 to 60,000 daily page views with roughly 5,000 to 6,000 model downloads per day, of which 5 to 15 percent come from 3D ContentCentral," Weedon points out. "We are realizing an increasing number of total model downloads in all CAD data formats each year, and 50 percent of those downloads are in the SOLIDWORKS format."

### MORE LEADS WITH AN INCREASE IN QUALITY

Because potential customers can download component models for inclusion in their designs, the number of leads generated and delivered to the company's sales force has increased and the quality of those leads has improved. Studies have shown that when a designer or engineer includes a specific brand of component in a design, they ultimately purchase the component 80 percent of the time.

"A model download typically results in a sale unless the prospective customer encounters availability issues or a similar component that is cheaper or easier to use," Weedon notes. "When someone downloads one of our models from 3D ContentCentral, we receive lead information on that prospect. We have a large sales staff, and these leads are forwarded to them. We've generated more leads than they can handle, but because they know our customers, they're able to filter these leads to find new opportunities."

### EASY TO UPDATE AND MAINTAIN

In addition to facilitating model downloads, 3DCC is easy for SMC to update and maintain. SMC's product set is continually being refined and improved, resulting in design and configuration changes. By using SOLIDWORKS design configuration tools, the configuration application developed by Technicon, and 3DCC, updating models for download to include these changes is as simple as sending XML file updates to 3DCC on a quarterly basis.

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### Focus on SMC Corporation of America

**Headquarters:** 10100 SMC Blvd.  
Noblesville, IN 46060  
USA  
Phone: +1 317 899 4440

**For more information**  
[www.smcusa.com](http://www.smcusa.com)



Updating and maintaining its online catalog of 3D models for download with the 3D ContentCentral online 3D catalog service is easy and cost-effective for SMC, requiring the pneumatics component supplier to simply send XML files updates on a quarterly basis.

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