

Sunbeam Corporation Ltd

Award-winning Australian retailer accelerates product design approval processes with Adobe® Acrobat® 3D

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www.sunbeam.com.au



Industry

Retail

Challenges

- Improve communication of 3D designs
- Move away from a paper-based product approval process
- Integrate solution into existing enterprise system
- More efficiently manage existing 3D data

Solution

- Product design collaboration
- Engineering document review and commenting

Sunbeam uses Adobe Acrobat 3D software to simplify dissemination of 3D product designs, manage feedback and approval, and shorten product design cycles

Results

- Streamlined review cycles
- Accelerated product approval
- Improved product lifecycle management
- Reduced product development time
- Enhanced access to 3D data

Systems At A Glance

- Adobe Acrobat 3D
- Unigraphics CAD software
- SolidWorks CAD software
- Alias Designstudio software

Sunbeam Corporation Ltd has been manufacturing small appliances since 1921 and currently offers more than 250 products. Committed to quality and performance, the company is responsible for some of the most innovative and award-winning Australian product designs.

Sunbeam prides itself on researching and implementing innovative IT solutions that enable designers to focus solely on design, rather than the technology needed to deliver designs.

An efficient design process is essential for Sunbeam to stay on the leading edge of product design. The process typically begins with the creation of 3D designs, which designers then expose to internal and external sources for input and comment. Sunbeam adopted the latest Adobe Acrobat 3D software to improve communication of 3D design concepts and increase the efficiency of the design approval process.

Enhanced sharing of 3D information

Previously, designers encountered limitations to sharing 3D content reliably inside and outside of the organization due to the prohibitive cost of deploying CAD software on every desktop. As a result, Sunbeam's designers either communicated new designs via face-to-face meetings that included showing product concepts displayed in 3D on a CAD-enabled computer or distributed 2D images when meetings were not possible. However, both communication methods resulted in delays to the design process because meetings were rarely immediate and 2D drawings and images were often hard to interpret.

Adobe Acrobat 3D software now enables Sunbeam's product designers to convert CAD design files to highly compressed 3D Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. Using the software, file sizes on average can be compressed 100 times smaller than originals, which typically can be hundreds of megabytes in size. The resulting 3D Adobe PDF file is then easily distributed via e-mail and opened using free Adobe Reader® software, available on 89% of all Internet-connected PCs.

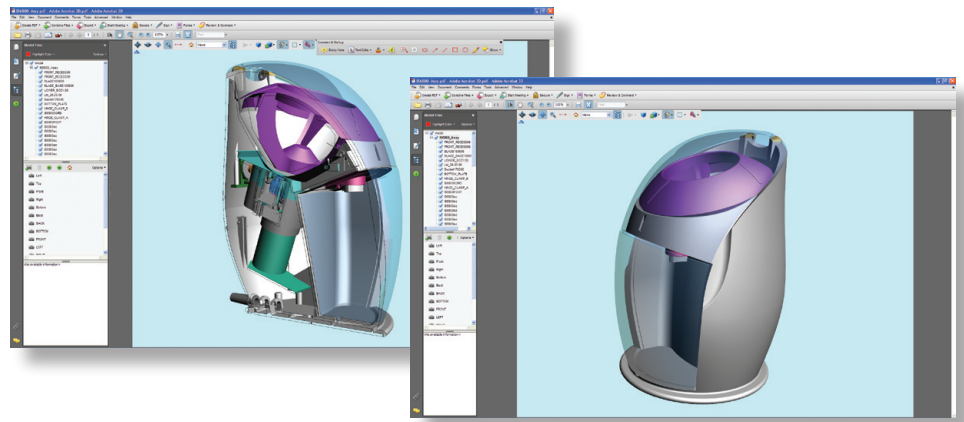
"Adobe Acrobat 3D is a revolutionary product that makes sharing design concepts easy," says Rick Freeman, manager, information systems for R&D at Sunbeam. "You no longer need an expensive CAD system, or special software, to view a 3D design, you can view it at your own desktop. This dramatically improves the collaborative and workflow process. Our designers are able to quickly expose designs to a broader audience and gain valuable early feedback."

Acrobat 3D also provides a secure environment for the transfer of files, helping ensure protection of intellectual property, an essential requirement for Sunbeam when dealing with early design concepts.

Digital signatures and e-forms speed up workflow

The latest Acrobat 3D software supports the creation of Adobe PDF files with extended usage rights that enable hidden features in the free Adobe Reader software. This lets Sunbeam incorporate electronic, interactive Adobe PDF forms and digital signatures, together with the 3D data, into design approval processes.

Sunbeam designers use Adobe Acrobat 3D to create 3D Adobe PDF files of product designs, which are sent to extended teams for review and comment. Using free Adobe Reader software, reviewers can comment on designs and provide digital signature approval.



“Adobe Acrobat 3D is now a 3D standard. It accelerates our product development by streamlining the process, and facilitates more valuable feedback for our designers, enabling them to focus on improved design.”

Rick Freeman
Information systems manager, R&D
Sunbeam Corporation Ltd

“In the design process, many people need to see the new product development concept and comment on it,” explains Freeman. “We need corporate approval and financial approval, as well as sign-off from others outside the organization, such as industry partners and manufacturers. The ability to include digital signatures and e-forms using Adobe Acrobat 3D liberates us from the endless paper trail.”

Now, distributed audiences can view the 3D information and provide feedback and comments on the Adobe PDF e-forms, along with a digital signature approval using Adobe Reader software. “After one person reviews and approves the design, the intelligent Adobe PDF e-form and embedded 3D data is automatically routed to the next person in the chain. This electronic process can save us weeks in getting a product to market,” says Freeman.

The intelligent Adobe PDF form links into Sunbeam’s enterprise system. The data is fully integrated into the back end databases and information systems, giving Sunbeam a greater and more immediate overview of a product’s status.

Enhanced 3D data management

Adobe Acrobat 3D also helps improve Sunbeam’s product lifecycle management (PLM) system. In the past, 3D data management was complex due to the variety of different CAD software applications used for design. The increasing number of versions available further complicated the process and sometimes led to issues of incompatibility and problems with accurate data retrieval.

Acrobat 3D now forms an integral part of Sunbeam’s archival system. With Acrobat 3D, Sunbeam saves different CAD files as larger, fully featured Adobe PDF files, making Sunbeam’s rich archive of 3D models available for all staff to view without the need for specialized software. Users can also extract data from the PDF file using industry standard translation formats such as STEP or Parasolid.

“I have great confidence using Adobe Acrobat 3D as part of our PLM system,” says Freeman. “Adobe has done a comprehensive job making Adobe Acrobat 3D compatible with past versions of the huge variety of CAD packages and they continue to include solutions for the latest 3D CAD formats. There is also the reassurance that as our needs grow and we require additional functionality, we can easily migrate to the Adobe LiveCycle® ES software suite.”

Increased productivity for the future

“We are excited about where Adobe is going with the integration of its software and what it means for our business,” says Freeman. “Adobe Acrobat 3D is now a 3D standard. It accelerates our product development by streamlining the process, and facilitates more valuable feedback for our designers, enabling them to focus on improved design. Adobe Australia gives us excellent service on an ongoing basis and this support is invaluable for our business. We look forward to continuing our journey with Adobe.”



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