


Span Tech LLC Are Designing for Customer Responsiveness with DriveWorks

 **SpanTech** Span Tech produces The Designer System® family of modular plastic chain curving conveyors.

Units must be physically interfaced to a broad range of installed machines at the customer's plant. These machines can be old or new, with their own dimensions, feed and connection requirements. The challenge was to engineer and design custom units quickly.

"We knew the benefits of 3D modelling," says Bud Layne, the company's chairman and CEO. "SOLIDWORKS demonstrated a superior interface and the broadest range of add-on functionality for assembly, plastics and sheet metal—things we need,"

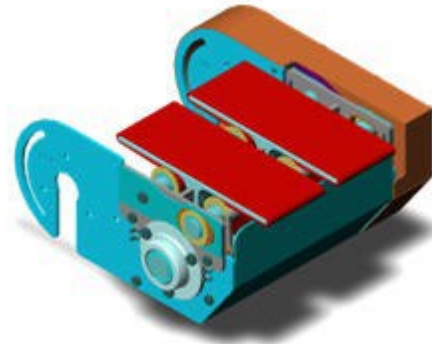
Automating in a User-Friendly Environment

Design engineer, Steve Fye said, *"We then wanted to capture all the design intent and automate the process in a user-friendly environment. We explored using just SOLIDWORKS and Microsoft Excel, but creating a solution this way was simply not practical."*

"In moving from Pro/E to SOLIDWORKS, we made productivity gains in modelling feature patterns and sheet metal design. However, we wanted to do more."

DriveWorks creates new, unique MicroSpan units from customer inputs. The range of variations is large, including various transfer widths, solid or split transfer chains, short chains or long chains, left or right drives etc.

Each unique design is created in moments from the rules and options in DriveWorks, which automatically sizes and assembles the required parts at their specified dimensions in a new SOLIDWORKS model.



The original SOLIDWORKS model is preserved, and the new one is saved as a record of one customer's purchase.

Benefits to the Customer and the Company

"There are two benefits," Fye points out. "First, we're able to keep a full record of each custom design, so we can go back to it whenever we want, say for maintenance spares or replacement parts. Second, every new transfer design can begin with the latest revision level in SOLIDWORKS. The result is that every customer's design can be viewed at the revision level in effect at the time of the order. All it costs is disk space, which is inexpensive these days."

"Our objective has always been to hook engineering to economics," says Bud Layne. "Our customers are price sensitive, so we've long sought for ways to lower design costs. DriveWorks allows us to bypass the usual 3 weeks required to design one of our custom products. Customers can get drawings the next day—they can even get graphics the same day via email—and more importantly, we can deliver product that costs from 12-15% less than our competition."

Time Saving Metrics

- 90% reduction in engineering time
- Products now 12-15% cheaper than competition
- Drawings available the next day to customers