

THIELE TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

HELPING CUSTOMERS SERVICE PACKAGING MACHINERY WITH SOLIDWORKS COMPOSER



With SOLIDWORKS Composer software, Thiele Technologies is replacing 2D PDF documentation for its packaging machines with easier-to-use, interactive Composer SMG files, which are more efficient and less costly to create.

Thiele
Technologies

A BARRY-WEHMLER COMPANY

Challenge:

Provide customers with more effective tools for servicing and maintaining automated packaging machinery and equipment, as well as better support for customer training initiatives.

Solution:

Implement SOLIDWORKS Composer technical communications software.

Results:

- Cut documentation time from 40 hours to five minutes
- Saved customers hours identifying parts and procedures
- Minimized travel requirements and costs
- Provided better context for customer service, maintenance, and training

Thiele Technologies, Inc., provides advanced high-speed packaging automation solutions worldwide to a variety of industries including fresh and frozen food, dairy, bakery, pet food, beverage, horticultural, paper goods, pharmaceutical, medical devices, cosmetics, commercial printing, contract packaging, mailing and fulfillment, and petrochemicals. A Barry-Wehmiller company, the manufacturer offers a complete range of end-of-line packaging machinery and equipment for domestic and international markets.

Thiele Technologies equipment requires documentation and usage instructions for safe operation and effective maintenance. Until 2009, Thiele Technologies supplied 2D engineering drawings and bills of materials (BOMs) for all of its machines in PDF format. Although this approach served Thiele and customer needs, it had drawbacks, according to Engineering Services Manager Daniel Hanson.

"Working in 2D has its shortcomings," Hanson explains. "It requires a significant amount of an engineer's time to generate exploded-view drawings and BOMs for each machine's parts catalog, and 2D PDFs are not as easy to use by our customers for identifying parts. All you have to imagine is a machine operator or maintenance technician rifling through a book of drawings or paging through a PDF file, desperately trying to locate the appropriate part number to get production back on-line, to understand how 3D can improve the process. With 3D, you can view the machine and get to your part in seconds. This is definitely the direction to go to improve customer experience."

When Thiele Technologies engineers, who use SOLIDWORKS design and product data management solutions for product development, heard about SOLIDWORKS Composer™ software, the solution drew Hanson's interest. "Documenting our machines has long been an area that we've targeted for improvement, so when we found out about SOLIDWORKS Composer, we just had to take a look," Hanson recalls.

MORE ACCURATE DOCUMENTATION IN LESS TIME

Thiele Technologies is using SOLIDWORKS Composer software to replace 2D PDF documentation with 3D SMG files. "SOLIDWORKS Composer lets us help our customers in unforeseen ways," Hanson stresses. "Reusing our 3D CAD data, we can provide customers with a SOLIDWORKS Composer package for machine assemblies that anyone can open, explore, and use for part identification and training."

Rather than create a series of 2D drawings for a machine's assembly, SOLIDWORKS Composer lets Thiele Technologies deliver a single 3D file containing the same information in a more usable format. "Prior to SOLIDWORKS Composer, an engineer might spend 25 hours to create exploded view drawings and BOMs, plus a technical writer might spend another 15 hours doing the required desktop publishing work to complete the manual," Hanson notes. "Machines with 15 to 20 assemblies could easily exceed 40 hours of documentation time. With SOLIDWORKS Composer, we've been able to achieve essentially the same thing in 5 minutes."

"Using SOLIDWORKS Composer, we don't need as many steps and transactions to get the information into a usable format. It's just a drag and drop from our vault."

"SOLIDWORKS composer represents a major step up from what we've been able to offer, and our customers are as excited as we are about the possibilities."

—Daniel Hanson, Engineering Services Manager

INTERACTIVE 3D MANUALS

Thiele Technologies customers are excited about the move to 3D documentation. "Maintenance technicians and production line managers have expressed their frustration with 2D drawings," Hanson says. "Trying to locate the correct drawing and then the correct part on the drawing takes time, especially if the clarity or detail of the drawing leaves room for ambiguity. SOLIDWORKS Composer eliminates this problem because the customer can navigate directly to the part, click on it, and read the part number."

Eric Henderson, a preventive maintenance technician with P&G Pet Care, which produces IAMS pet food, says 3D SMG files are a big improvement. "We have many machines in our department," Henderson explains. "Keeping those machines operating 24/7 is imperative. 3D makes it easier to establish procedures and feed part numbers into SAP. Having information at our fingertips instead of shuffling through PDFs is a huge advantage."

PROVIDING CONTEXT FOR CUSTOMERS

Thiele Technologies customer training is more effective because 3D documentation provides the same context as being on-site. "SOLIDWORKS Composer is a great training tool," Hanson says. "Instead of traveling on-site and interfering with a customer's production schedule, we can complete much of the training online using SMG files."

"For example, I can show an SMG file to all 10 people on a machine without having to be right at the equipment where it's often very loud and difficult to train. Explaining a concept or talking about a particular part in a complex assembly is much easier using 3D models," Hanson adds. "SOLIDWORKS Composer represents a major step up from what we've been able to offer, and our customers are as excited as we are about the possibilities."



Click here to view animated assembly instructions created in SOLIDWORKS Composer.

Focus on Thiele Technologies, Inc.

VAR: Symmetry Solutions Inc.
Brooklyn Park, MN, USA

Headquarters:

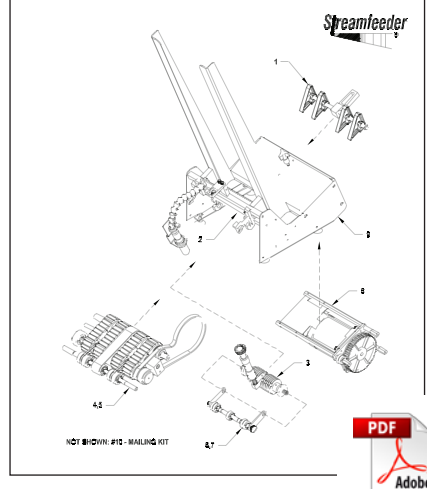
315 27th Avenue NE
Minneapolis, MN 55418 USA
Phone: +1 612 782 1200

For more information

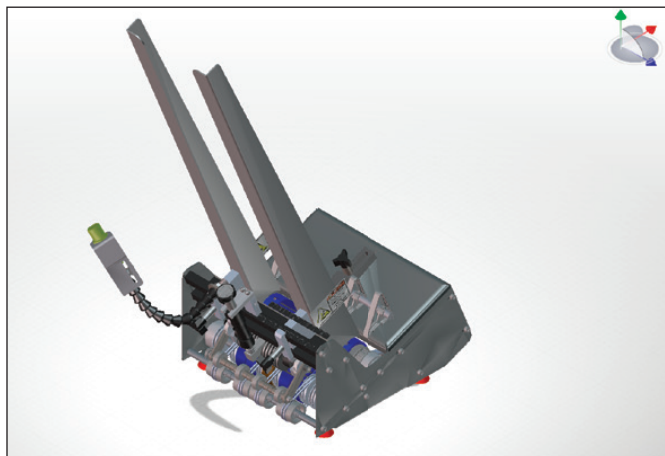
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Machine parts and service reference material before SOLIDWORKS Composer

9 Mechanical Components



Machine parts and service reference material after SOLIDWORKS Composer



Users of Thiele Technologies packaging machines used to have to leaf through stacks of 2D PDF drawings, shown at top, for parts and service information. Now, Thiele Technologies' customers can quickly interrogate an interactive Composer SMG file to access this vital information more easily.

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| The 3DEXPERIENCE Company

Americas

Dassault Systèmes
175 Wyman Street
Waltham, Massachusetts
02451-1223
USA

Europe/Middle East/Africa

Dassault Systèmes
10, rue Marcel Dassault
CS 40501
78946 Vélizy-Villacoublay Cedex
France

Asia-Pacific

Dassault Systèmes K.K.
ThinkPark Tower
2-1-1 Osaki, Shinagawa-ku,
Tokyo 141-6020
Japan