

## Dassault Systèmes' Industry Strategy Comes Into Focus at DSCC 2011

CIMdata Commentary

On November 8 through 10, Dassault Systèmes held the Dassault Systèmes Customer Conference (DSCC 2011) at Caesars Palace, on the Strip in Las Vegas, NV. The glamour and glitz outside were more than matched by the high wattage firepower on the main stage. Most of the top Dassault Systèmes executives were front and center, cheering on their leading customers like Johnson & Johnson, Bell Helicopter, and Benetton. The wide range of industries represented by these customers is indicative of the shift at the company over the last several years to broaden their traditional strengths in “planes, trains, and automobiles,” to successfully compete in apparel, consumer packaged goods, and even services applications of PLM.

As usual, Bernard Charlès revved up the crowd with a passionate speech about his company, and how they plan to move forward over the coming decades. According to Mr. Charlès, customer adoption of their Version 6 platform is accelerating, with good acceptance in many industries. Continuing the precedent set at their June event in Paris, Mr. Charlès was joined on stage by Ms. Monica Menghini, Dassault Systèmes' Executive Vice President for Industry and Corporate Marketing, who is driving their industry strategy and its organizational implementation across the company. They make a good pair on the stage, as Ms. Menghini is equally passionate about Dassault Systèmes and the changes they are making to develop and deliver industry solutions across eleven targeted industries. The key word in her talk was “experience,” and she explained how different industries will come to rely on Dassault Systèmes' solutions to deliver that experience to their end customers to enhance their business processes, and to better draw their customers into the collaborative innovation process.

For a number of years, Dassault Systèmes has used a stair-step chart, showing how, in their opinion, their vision and execution have led the market throughout recent history. Titles on previous steps have included “Digital Mock-Up” and “Product Lifecycle Management” (PLM), among others. The step for the current timeframe is titled “Lifelike Experience,” shorthand for bringing high fidelity visualization and simulation into play to solve high value problems across multiple industries. During her presentation, Ms. Menghini highlighted how Dassault Systèmes is bringing lifelike experience to shopping, aerospace, and other industries.

Many of the major players in the PLM space offer industry solutions, some for nearly twenty years. In many cases, these solutions are the result of one or two customer engagements in the given industry that are then repackaged to provide a solution for others in the same industry. Some of these solutions are quite good, but others are shallow and do not decrease the services necessary to deliver them by very much. Dassault Systèmes claims to be taking a much deeper approach. They are in the process of building out their industry teams and setting the vision for their enhanced solutions, a variety of which were presented in the Industry tracks at the event. Vetting these solution plans with customers and prospects is important to ensure their relevance and perceived value. Of course, more important is the development and delivery of those solutions in a timely manner. This will be a big change for Dassault Systèmes which historically has driven product delivery based on technological content rather than market deadlines. Getting more direct market input into the product

development process from across these many industries is a great step, but it will create challenges in setting development priorities. Equally important, while the vision is potentially enough to differentiate Dassault Systèmes in the market, companies still have day-to-day problems that their chosen PLM solution supplier must also address. If Dassault Systèmes can meet both of these challenges simultaneously, bringing their futuristic vision to life while meeting current needs across eleven industry segments, they will be creating a powerful engine for continued growth and for sustaining their market leadership position.

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