

3DExperience Forum: New Name, Expanded Vision

CIMdata Commentary

Key takeaways:

- *Dassault Systèmes rebranded their customer events “3DExperience Forums,” a new name consistent with their extensive repositioning and global corporate advertising campaign.*
- *Dassault Systèmes believes that creating unique “experiences” the path to sustainable competitive advantage.*
- *Systems engineering, based on integral support for the RFLP approach, is at the core of the V6 offerings.*

On November 5-7, 2012, Dassault Systèmes held their North American customer event, rechristened the “3DExperience Forum,” a new name that is consistent with their extensive repositioning and global corporate advertising campaign. Approximately 800 people (including about 450 customer representatives) attended the Orlando event.

Author Joseph Pine played informal MC, providing comments in each plenary session. His 1999 book “The Experience Economy” is right on target for Dassault Systèmes 2012 messaging around “experiences” as today’s product differentiator. A key point of his day 1 talk is that, to create value, companies are providing services associated with their products. However, those services can become commoditized and lose their value differentiation. When you can customize services around a product by providing unique customer experiences, you create differentiation and, potentially, sustainable competitive advantage. But are these experiences tangible, building on the shoulders of strong PLM strategies and solutions, or are they mere “theatre” on a “stage” as suggested in the subtitle to his book?

While it is easy to focus on “3D” in the 3DExperience messaging, much of what is happening under the covers is repurposing and packaging much of Dassault Systèmes’ existing functionality. They then add new capabilities to create solutions such as “Winning Program,” an experience-based solution for aerospace and defense (A&D) companies to compete and win. As highlighted at the event, Winning Program applies existing program management, simulation, and process management capabilities to help proposal teams make their bids come alive to their prospective customers, and make those bids profitable by helping assess the downstream impacts and costs of decisions made during the bid process. Such industry tailored, role-based solutions will provide specific capabilities across product and project teams. Many of the solutions use simulations and analyses of different types to drive the experience. Dassault Systèmes claims they will create such experiences for all of their 12 industries.

A big question is will this resonate with their long-time customers who are still heads down in their PLM journeys? The answer provided by GE Energy is a resounding “yes.” According to John Shorter, CIO at GE Energy, a long time MatrixOne/ENOVIA customer, they did not really understand PLM until MatrixOne was acquired by Dassault Systèmes in 2006. The scope of their implementation is impressive: they claimed to have 60,000 users spread across 18 global sites, managing 15 million models and drawings, and moving 1 million parts

per hour around the globe. His passion for the move to experiences and how ENOVIA V6 was powering their business was evident. One possible reason the move to experiences is important to GE Energy is that over half their revenue comes from services, which reinforces Pine's message about the need to differentiate services through providing high-value experiences for customers.

Glenn Isbell of Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc., provided an update on their "Relentless" program, a rethinking of their entire enterprise software strategy and implementation. Mr. Isbell described how ENOVIA V6 is at the core of their new enterprise strategy, enabling collaboration across multiple functions.

Another consistent theme across many of the sessions was the criticality of systems engineering in multiple industries. This is consistent with CIMdata's experience working with end user customers, as documented in presentations at our recent PLM Market & Industry Forums. More products rely on software to deliver their differentiating value. (Interestingly, the most passionate discussions about systems engineering occurred at our Shanghai session, showing how the Chinese recognize this trend and know they need to embrace it to move their products up the global value chain.) To support this trend, Dassault Systèmes has put Requirements–Functional–Logical–Physical (RFLP) modeling at the core of V6. RFLP is the heart of the systems engineering discipline, and supported by the International Council on Systems Engineering (INCOSE). While the practice of systems engineering is more mature in A&D and automotive, significant work is still required to continue its maturation in those industries and to bring that knowledge and experience to other industries, a process that CIMdata plans to support through our newly formed Systems Engineering Knowledge Council.

In summary, Dassault Systèmes, a company that views their history and evolution in a series of epochs (they are now at DS4), took a solid step forward with this rebranded event with an agenda of customers who believe in this new experience approach to product development and lifecycle management. The early "experiences" look promising and we look forward to seeing more details as they roll out. There will still be a tension between PLM and "beyond PLM," as some at Dassault Systèmes position it, but if they can deliver experiences that can help their customers win new business profitably, more customers will get behind this expanded direction.

About CIMdata

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