

Siemens PLM Software Acquires Vistagy

CIMdata Commentary

On November 9, 2011, Siemens PLM Software announced their acquisition of Vistagy, Inc., known mainly as a leading provider of composites design and manufacturing solutions. Vistagy has been a long-time partner of Siemens PLM Software, providing solutions to enhance the ability of their NX offering, to help customers more effectively design and manufacture composite structures. Vistagy also offers engineering services, and has expanded their product line in recent years to include other specialty applications.

Most notably used in aerospace applications, composites use is spreading across many industries, and thus, composite design solutions are growing in importance. Automotive manufacturers are replacing steel and aluminum components with composites to reduce weight; in some cases simultaneously increasing strength and rigidity. In the broad consumer market, many tennis players rely on composite rackets to approximate the strokes and power of their favorite tennis players. But it is in aerospace that composites have made some things possible that were formerly impossible. Boeing, for example, seeks to achieve aggressive efficiency and customer comfort targets for its 787, through extensive use of composites in its construction.

Bringing Vistagy into the Siemens PLM Software family is a good move. Vistagy is a long-time leader in the space, and potentially brings a lot of that knowledge into the Siemens PLM Software solution offering, to benefit many industries. (Keeping this knowledge in the combined entity is always an issue in acquisitions, but Siemens PLM Software has successfully negotiated this road many times before.) Having these capabilities more tightly embedded in NX will help Siemens PLM Software compete more effectively in aerospace, where they have the leading position in the collaborative Product Definition management (cPDM) segment with their Teamcenter portfolio, but trail in Mechanical Computer-Aided Design (MCAD). It also has the potential to affect their leading competitor in this industry segment, Dassault Systèmes. Dassault Systèmes has invested significant time and resources to build a solution to compete effectively against Vistagy over the last decade, and has made a lot of progress. But it is important to note that Vistagy is also one of the leading partners of Dassault Systèmes in the composites space. This is another good example of “coopetition” in the PLM space, where partnerships with one player can be affected by acquisitions. For example, Siemens PLM Software was on the other side of this ledger when their long-time sustainability partner, Synapsis, was acquired by PTC in 2008. In most cases, the players do the right thing for their customers and maintain the relationship, and surely that will be the case here.

This acquisition will enhance Siemens PLM Software’s NX offering for composites applications, which will be a boon to their customers and the PLM industry as a whole, as the Vistagy solutions go from being offered by a small company to being part of one of the PLM industry leader’s portfolios.

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