



teknion

2020 Customer Success Story

Teknion Wows the Design World with More Sophisticated Wood and Casegoods

Innovative beautiful design, grounded in principles of quality and durability, are primary values at international office furniture designer and manufacturer Teknion. A fine example of this philosophy is its Tekwood division, which manufactures wood veneer products.

Teknion was one of the first to introduce a warmer, more residential aesthetic to the office space. These designs radically changed how office spaces looked.

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The District product line, which introduced new casegoods formats and refined architectural features, was an award-winning star that led a design evolution in the office furniture industry. “You didn’t see a lot of residential look-and-feel in the traditional cubicle environment at the time,” said Richard Wolfe, VP and General Manager at Teknion. “Most office spaces relied on metal pedestals and filing cabinets, and two-dimensional flat panels like work surfaces, gables, and wall panels.”

District offered a flood of new options. “District was very unique at the time,” he said. “It was exciting.”

Custom IT System Couldn’t Manage Custom Furniture Solutions

Putting together award-winning designs was one thing; manufacturing it was another. Operations was under tremendous pressure to execute on these designs, which put a big strain on their software. “Tekwood was using custom-built software that relied on a fixed bill of material—which was better suited to higher volume and fewer options,” said Richard.

So Richard, who was a part of the software selection team at the time, started looking for a new system. The team decided on 2020 Insight, a software solution that was designed for quickly producing customized office furniture. Teknion office dealers were already using 2020 Cap or 2020 Giza software for designing office spaces, so the selection of 2020 Insight would allow for product data to be imported electronically all the way from order right through to the shop floor, for faster, more responsive, and more accurate production.



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The Right Implementation

Implementation was quick and successful at Tekwood. “One of 2020 Insight’s great strengths is being able to generate CNC code from a configurable engineering model very efficiently,” Richard said. “We put that capability in place in three months and we were completely implemented at all our plants in less than a year.”

The new system required a change in thinking for much of the plant, which had to evolve from a BOM-focused approach to one based on 2020 Construct, a parametric, construction-based engineering solution. “2020 Professional Services team did a good job of providing us with a training program,” he said. “It included valuable on-site training for key individuals, leveraging the new District product line as our training ground.”

The speed and flexibility of the software itself around custom products was a big benefit. “A lot of our strength is our ability to react and design solutions for our clients. This software allows us to quickly move those custom solutions into a manufacturable product.”

Tekwood also integrated its financial software to the system. “That link works well,” he said. “It gives us more robust reporting and eliminates rekeying of data.”



Getting Noticed by the Industry

With the software up and running, products started to roll off the line. And a lot of people took notice.

“We introduced District at a pivotal time in North America,” said Jeff Ball, Director, Corporate Marketing at Teknion.

“Clients were looking for a different kind of panel system, and the higher level of refinement we brought really caught the design community’s attention.”

District has turned out to be one of the company’s most successful lines and for the past ten years, continues to be integrated into more and more of Teknion’s product lines.

“District has been a big success for us,” said Jeff. “The complexity is really distinct—there are literally thousands of options with the different variations in size and finish. District was one of Teknion’s biggest catalogs when it launched, and we continue to expand it.”



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2020 Makes Transformation of Business Possible

Richard, who played a central role in the software implementation, was very pleased. “2020 Insight made this new product launch possible,” he said. “There is simply no way we could have done it in such a limited time without it.”

“If you look at the evolution of Tekwood, we went from two-dimensional manufacturing to a three-dimensional business,” Richard said. “We went from flat panel products to pedestals, credenzas, lateral files, overhead storage units, hutches, bookcases, storage towers, mixed materials...it was a whole new world.”

Special orders that come in, with a variation on size or finish, can be completed in a fraction of the time on the new system. “2020 Insight lets you take a model and all the combinations and variations that are associated with it, put in your features and options, and have drawings and CNC code available very quickly for execution on the shop floor,” he said. “Custom or semi-custom orders take at least 50 percent less time to produce. It’s reduced our new product line creation and launch effort by around 50 percent, as well.”

Reducing Costs Through Better Quality Data

The new system provides better quality data, which reduces errors and eliminates manual rekeying of information. Customers that use 2020 Cap or 2020 Giza can create orders that get delivered electronically from order right through to the Tekwood plant.

“There aren’t a lot of software packages out there that so effectively link your sales orders and product configurations to the shop floor,” Richard said. “You don’t have as many errors because you’ve removed a lot of human intervention.”

The central store of data has also been a valuable resource for the Operations team. “We don’t have to look at multiple locations to get the data we need,” Richard said. “That’s a big advantage. We have dashboards for our managers that allow us to monitor our performance in real time. Much of this is possible due to the strong shop floor tracking offered through Insight. Good shop floor tracking also makes material planning and product scheduling more effective.”

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Streamlining Production

Richard was also impressed by 2020 Insight's workflows, which have helped improve processes at the plant. "At the time a strong workflow tool wasn't something that a lot of software packages offered. It's helped us automate a lot of our processes, while being flexible enough to accommodate our specific needs," he said. "The workflow tool also helped better define our business process and clarify roles and responsibilities."

With Operations able to respond so quickly to design demands, Tekwood has been able to produce wood and casegoods products that their customers truly love.

"Our approach with our clients and the design community is to collaborate to optimize solutions together. We can do that because we are a vertically integrated company. We have the operational flexibility to modify products to meet specific customer needs. This really sets us apart from our competitors.

"We've been able to adapt to how the market is evolving," he added. "We're constantly taking a pulse on what's influencing markets all over the world.

"2020 Insight was really the right decision for Tekwood," he concluded. "It's a strong fit with our business needs, and it has allowed us to grow while meeting the individual needs of our customers."



AT A GLANCE

Challenge:

Respond quickly to industry design demands with new, innovative product line.

Solution:

Flexibility to customize products and speed to launch new product line in response to customer requirements using 2020 Insight.

Benefits:

- Reduced production time for custom and semi-custom products by 50%
- Reduced new product creation and launch time by 50%
- Decreased data keying errors by linking sales orders and product configuration to the shop floor
- Improved materials planning and product scheduling using robust shop floor tracking
- Improved internal business processes using 2020 Insight's workflow tool