

AESSEAL sharpens competitive edge with SpaceMouse and SpaceBall



As the world's 6th largest mechanical seal producer, AESSEAL was seeking to improve its competitive position by delivering high-quality custom products faster than its competition. Mechanical seals are used everywhere, to increase equipment efficiency, conserve power, prevent leakage of harmful gases and liquids, and protect against life-threatening accidents. With revenues of \$50M, AESSEAL supports customers in 50 countries and in 12

distinct industries, designing and delivering over 1000 custom-designed seals each year. This puts tremendous pressure on the designers to work faster and smarter. AESSEAL determined that fast turnaround and delivery of quality products—more than price—was the key to winning new customers and retaining existing ones.



15% Reduction in Turnaround Time

With 18 Solid Edge designers, AESSEAL was looking to leverage this critical human resource to reduce turnaround time. They evaluated the SpaceBall and users found it intuitive and it immediately made them more productive and efficient. Chris Newton, the Senior Design Engineer, at first thought the SpaceBall to be non-essential.

"But after I saw the 15% reduction in design time, what I thought was a 'nicety' became a necessity." Chris became so convinced, that he made the 3Dconnexion SpaceBall and SpaceMouse standard equipment for every design engineer.

One Month Payback

"As with most AESSEAL investments, we wanted to determine the ROI of the SpaceBall and SpaceMouse," said Newton. "We determined that we could design 15% faster using a SpaceBall. Our fully burdened costs for designers average \$5000/month, so we gained \$750/month in increased productivity, well above the cost of the SpaceBall."

"So with a one-month payback, we confirmed that it was a smart business decision to equip each designer with a SpaceBall." The SpaceBall productivity gains were even more impressive on the three CAM workstations using Unigraphics. "With the CAM users, we found that they could do the same work in half the time," said Newton.

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Like Working with One Arm Cut Off

AESSEAL designers have quickly adopted the SpaceBall in their work. Typically they find it takes from just a few minutes to a few hours to become comfortable and productive with the SpaceBall. Users find that they have better control of their model, enabling them to have more accurate designs, all in less time.

"Designing without the SpaceBall feels like working with one arm cut off," reports Phil Wall, an AESSEAL designer. "It's the natural way to work - we work with two hands all the time. It would be terrible if I couldn't use the SpaceBall for designing." Chris Newton agreed, adding, "I would have a riot if I took the SpaceBalls away from my designers."

Competitive Edge

AESSEAL's mission, to provide customers such exceptional service that they need never consider alternative sources of supply, has been put to the test in the recent months. Customer satisfaction is key in the mechanical seal market and quality is critical. Seals in oil refineries, food preparation and pharmaceuticals must work as expected.

AESSEAL recently created 504 new seal designs in one month, only possible with the increased productivity and design quality gained by equipping each of their design engineers with a SpaceBall. In an industry that is growing by only 1%, AESSEAL has been growing at 25% per year, the result of strong management, clear business vision, and its ability to implement its vision of faster turnaround by equipping all AESSEAL design engineers with SpaceBalls and SpaceMice.

