



CASE HISTORY

EuroTec International Finds Resounding Success With Actify's SpinFire Professional.

Actify's Design Visualization Improves Response Time and Productivity in Audio Design

Located in Hampshire, in the UK, EuroTec International is one of the premier suppliers of audio design services for automakers, industrial customers, gaming companies, and makers of public address systems. Its customers are respected brands such as VW, Ford, GM, and many others. EuroTec's experience includes 30 years of design and manufacturing, primarily for tier-one clients with large-scale requirements and precision specifications. With projects worldwide, the company is a key resource in the design and supply of loudspeakers, tweeters, subwoofers, grills and other audio devices.

EuroTec has been designing and supplying speakers since 1973, so it is fair to say that while many people have not heard of the company, many of them have been listening to EuroTec for years. In addition to its presence in Europe, EuroTec serves as the lead customer liaison for projects throughout the world through its role as the primary marketing arm for several engineering and design partners in Asia.

Streamlining Design Process Led To Company Growth

Initially, EuroTec was established because many automobiles arrived in

their destination countries without any stereo system installed. At that point, it was very challenging to engineer a sound system to take full advantage of a car's physical design. Since many customers use their sound system on a daily basis, it is an important element of the car, and installation is not as simple as it might seem. Many variables come into play, including the speaker placement, interior acoustics, volume of available air, and alignment of the speakers with respect to the listener.

"Originally the company was set up because we saw a gap in the market - where vehicles were being manufactured and arriving in countries without stereos and loudspeakers," said John Radford, Research and Development Manager for EuroTec, International PLC. "The opportunity was to fit speakers in quickly and efficiently as they arrived in a country. And the way in which they are installed is critical to the way they function."

Over the years, EuroTec became more than a late-stage partner, and began using its expertise in sound and acoustics to influence the acoustical design earlier in the process.

"Where we began as a second-tier supplier, we have now worked our way back up the customer chain so we are now a first-tier partner supplying the

"We found one company used five miles of plotted paper during a single production cycle. Since they introduced SpinFire they have reduced that to two miles of plotted paper and hope to reduce it further still."

auto manufacturers themselves, and we can influence how the loudspeakers and grill fit into the vehicle," said Radford.

"As we have become more integrated into the design process, it has become more critical for us to work closely with the early-stage designs of our customers. A single design can go through multiple iterations early on, and it is essential for us to assess the design and respond quickly. Therefore it has become even more important for us to be able to read a variety of design formats," Radford commented.

Early Access to Full CAD Designs Enabled EUROTEC to Expand

One of the biggest challenges for EuroTec was having access to the complete design at a very early stage in order to provide cost bids on a project. In the RFQ process, it is critical to have a complete, accurate, current version of the design in order to win the business. Since there is no single, central design software used throughout the industry, the company has to be able to quickly read and comment on designs done in a variety of software systems, including CATIA, Delcam, and EDS I-DEAS and Unigraphics.

The key reasons EuroTec began using SpinFire Professional are:

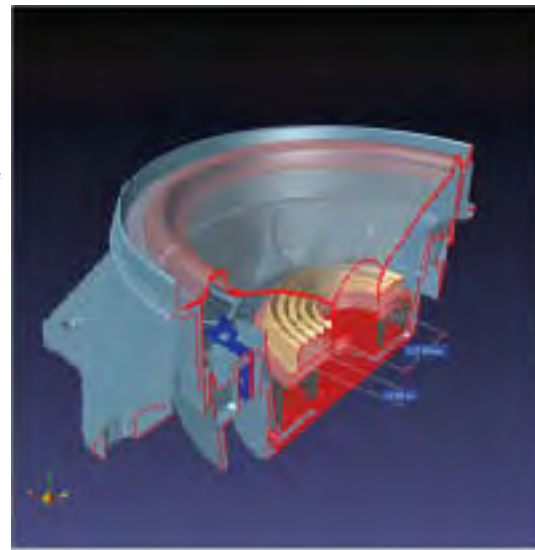
- **Speed of response to customer inquiries**
- **Accuracy of viewing design data**
- **Improved ability to communicate electronically**
- **Cost savings and productivity gains**

Radford said, "Historically, when we would receive files from existing or potential clients, they could be in one of several formats, and we didn't necessarily work with each piece of software. We could have purchased licenses for each of these systems, but not only was the software expensive, it also required dedicated workstations. Obviously it would be extremely expensive to invest in all the platforms our customers use."

Actify SpinFire Professional Delivers Design Access and Communication

To solve this problem EuroTec turned to Actify, and SpinFire Professional, their Digital Design Communication solution. "Where SpinFire Pro has been so useful to us is the speed of access. It allows us to quickly respond to a complex request and to turn it around within the week, and frequently within the same day. SpinFire Pro gives us the ability to look at CAD data from almost any platform without having to use the CAD software the customer is using," said Radford.

"In our own design efforts we mainly use Catia V5, but also Pro/E and I-DEAS. Even when you have the software, however, it doesn't make sense to have a dedicated CAD workstation used as a viewer. It's not just the software cost, but also the hardware and the productivity of having that seat tied up. Through productivity savings alone, SpinFire has saved us tens of thousands of pounds," he added.



Actify SpinFire Enables Greater Accuracy

With SpinFire EuroTec has access to complete, accurate design information. Instead of relying on conversions or interchange formats, with Actify SpinFire EuroTec can work with the original design.

"Being able to confidently request the full CAD files enables you to evaluate what should be changed much earlier in the process, and can often enable us to make changes that save the manufacturer substantial sums during production. When they send us a complete design and we are able to analyze it immediately, and that builds confidence and makes for a smooth customer relationship.

SpinFire Pro has also allowed EuroTec to be more efficient in costing its bids. The company often works on fixed cost bids and both their reputations and their profits are on the line. This is of paramount importance in the auto industry. They normally work on quantities of 10,000 to 20,000 or more per year, per job, and the contracts last from 3 years upwards. Small savings are magnified through both scale and

time.

Before using SpinFire Pro, in order to access the drawings EuroTec used to go to an outside company to translate the data -- at a cost of 100 to 300 pounds. In other cases they would have to write back to the customer asking for IGES data or another intermediary format. That often led to incomplete data sets in the drawings.

"If you are not absolutely sure of the costs and the data to make that part, then you haven't sharpened your pencil as much as is needed. With SpinFire, rather than getting a 2D drawing and not understanding it immediately, we've got a 3-D model with complete information," Radford said.

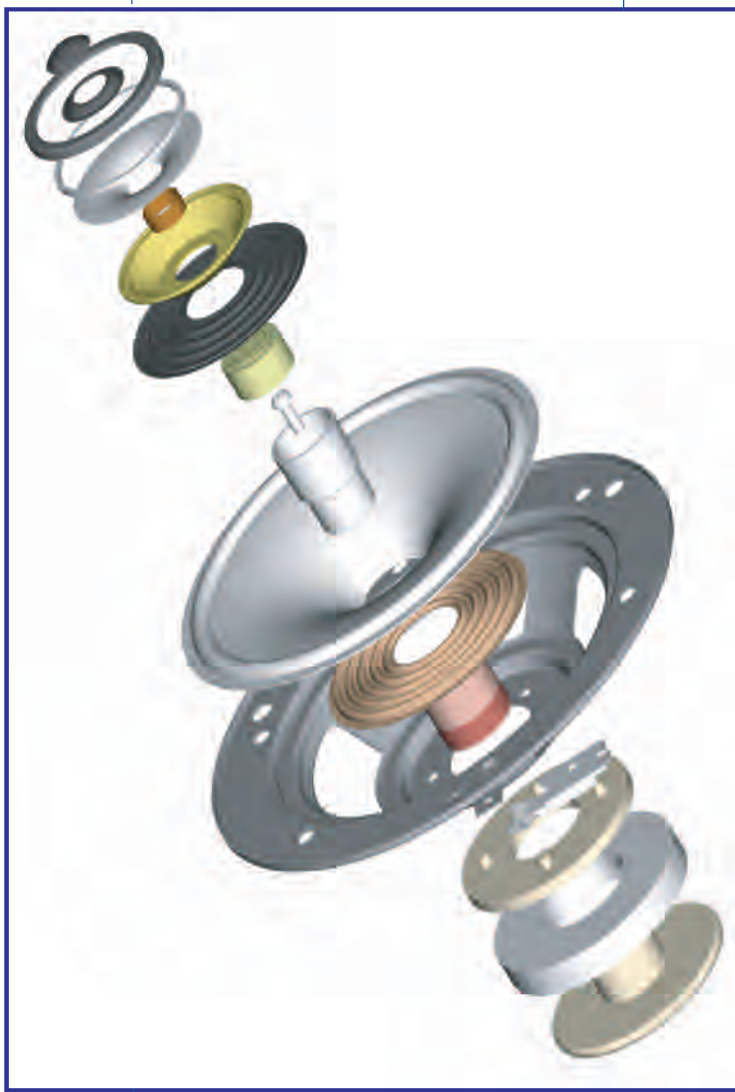
Actify SpinFire Trims Costs, Gives Access to Non-Technical Users

For non-technical users, SpinFire provides quick answers to critical questions. Many times, Eurotec will have questions about costing or production issues, and the person who needs the answer is an acoustics engineer or a cost analyst who does not need to use a complete CAD system. In fact, using the CAD system would slow down the process, and cost them several days.

"Later we discovered that IGES files can be very risky to use. It was only after we began using SpinFire Pro

that we realised how much data was being lost when we got IGES files.

When we compared the IGES files to what we were seeing in SpinFire, we also realised that the assembled



nature of the data can be lost in the translation into other CAD packages. SpinFire is particularly good in bringing the data into position. When working with assemblies SpinFire is at its best."

EuroTec's ability to provide design expertise and advice has helped the company to improve its customer relationships. With SpinFire Pro, EuroTec can respond to the many changes that take place early in the

design process, even before the design has been finalised. Not only is EuroTec brought in at the beginning of the process, it is also seen as an important resource.

"Our biggest gain has been through increased productivity. For example, recently an OEM came to us with parts they wanted us to produce. Normally it would have been a 14 to 16-month project, but because we were able to see the design and communicate our changes so quickly we were able to turn it around in six months with SpinFire," Radford said.

"Obviously we have some top-notch engineers and production people, and they are our major asset. SpinFire allows them to see the designs they are working on more quickly and convey their recommendations to our customers in a timely fashion. It's been a great addition to our organization."



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