

THE POSH SHED COMPANY HELPING CUSTOMERS CONFIGURE THE POSH SHED THEY WANT WITH SOLIDWORKS[®] SELL

Case Study



The Posh Shed Company leverages the SOLIDWORKS Sell online product configuration solution to enable customers to more conveniently, efficiently, and interactively configure the Posh Shed of their dreams online, with the ability for each customer to view a high-quality 3D rendering of his or her custom-configured shed before placing an order.

Challenge:

Add visual product configuration capabilities to its website to support online shed configuration orders and improve the online shopping experience.

Solution:

Implement the SOLIDWORKS Sell online product configuration solution, leveraging existing 3D data.

Results:

- Reduced inquiry-to-order time significantly, improving cash flow
- Realized 10 percent of all web traffic as configuration activity
- Supported tens of thousands of possible shed combinations
- Improved the online shopping experience

Backyard sheds run the gamut from basic utility structures to charming mini-houses that serve a variety of purposes, such as gardening, potting, and relaxation. It's the latter type of small, decorative buildings—sheds that complement residential homes—that is the bailiwick of The Posh Shed Company. A subsidiary of United-Kindgom-based Playchildren Ltd., The Posh Shed Company designs, manufactures, and builds a range of configurable backyard and garden sheds, and also provides a custom-designed, bespoke service.

Offering unique designs like The Chelsea, The Ludlow, and The Gothic Shed, the company builds sheds of several types with many options and building finishes, ranging from Posh to Very Posh to Unbelievably Posh. The number of shed models and the range of shed building finish levels combine to produce a large number of possible unique shed configurations. To make the shed configuration process more efficient and the online shopping experience more enjoyable for customers, The Posh Shed Company began looking for an online product configuration solution, according to Sales & Marketing Manager Jessica Pritchard.

"In the past, customers typically configured their sheds over the phone, which took some time and did not provide an immediate visual reference," Pritchard explains. "We were looking for different ways to get realistic 3D representations of custom-configured sheds on our website, so customers could interactively configure their own sheds and receive instantaneous visual feedback of how their chosen shed design will look. In addition to saving time and giving customers a more enjoyable online ordering experience, we believed that adding configuration capabilities to our website would help us sell more sheds."

While the company's initial search for an online configuration solution resulted in what Pritchard termed "pricy" services, it eventually learned about the SOLIDWORKS Sell online product configuration solution from Dassault Systèmes SOLIDWORKS Corp. "Our company uses SOLIDWORKS 3D design software to design our sheds and we came across SOLIDWORKS Sell, which turned out to be a lot more affordable, on the SOLIDWORKS Blog," Pritchard recalls.

The Posh Shed Company chose to implement the SOLIDWORKS Sell online product configuration solution because it is cost effective and works well with SOLIDWORKS design data, providing integration through the SOLIDWORKS Application Programming Interface (API). SOLIDWORKS Sell is also web-based, and requires no dedicated hardware, reducing the cost of IT. "We were able to work directly with the SOLIDWORKS development team and APO to add some features that are unique to us," Pritchard says.

CONFIGURATION CAPABILITIES SHORTEN INQUIRY-TO-ORDER TIME

Since the SOLIDWORKS Sell-powered online configurator went live on The Posh Shed Company website in mid-2018, the shed manufacturer has experienced a reduction in customer inquiry-to-order time, resulting in improved cash flow. Roughly 10 percent of all visits to The Posh Shed Company website now involve prospective customers using the SOLIDWORKS Sell-powered online configurator.

In the first six months, the company sold many sheds using SOLIDWORKS Sell, with customers paying directly by credit card. Many more orders were placed during subsequent phone calls. "The SOLIDWORKS Sell configurator links with our Content Management System (CMS) to generate SKUs and provide live pricing information on the specific shed configuration order via the SOLIDWORKS API," Pritchard points out. "With this capability, customers can configure, order, and purchase a shed without ever having to speak with a salesperson, although they are still able to contact us if they prefer."

SUPPORTING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF SHED COMBINATIONS

With SOLIDWORKS Sell, The Posh Shed Company can support tens of thousands of distinct shed configuration combinations without the need for human intervention. "We have different levels of configurations, including configurations within configurations," Pritchard notes.

"On our Potting Shed, for example, there are five standard sizes, three roof options, and six color choices—not to mention different variations of window placements, door placements, and door hinging," she adds. "We literally have thousands, if not tens of thousands, of potential option combinations for each model, and we have nearly a dozen models."



"SOLIDWORKS Sell is helping us to make the configuring and ordering process an interactive, enjoyable, and painless experience for customers, which helps us sell more sheds."

— Jessica Pritchard, Sales & Marketing Manager

IMPROVING THE ONLINE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

The addition of the SOLIDWORKS Sell online product configurator to The Posh Shed Company website has also dramatically enhanced the online shed shopping experience.

"With SOLIDWORKS Sell, we're giving the customer the power to configure his or her own unique shed, immediately generate a photo-realistically rendered visual representation of the configured shed, and even the ability to compare different configurations before making a selection," Pritchard stresses.

"While this service certainly frees up our designers from having to produce renderings for customers, more importantly, it provides the visual feedback to customers that is so important for facilitating the purchasing process," Pritchard continues. "SOLIDWORKS Sell is helping us to make the configuring and ordering process an interactive, enjoyable, and painless experience for customers, which helps us sell more sheds."

Focus on The Posh Shed Company
VAR: Solid Solutions, Leamington Spa, England,
United Kingdom

Headquarters: The Posh Shed Company
Little Orchard Farm
Eardisland, Herefordshire HR6 9AS
United Kingdom
Phone: +44 (0) 1544 387101

For more information
www.theposhshedcompany.co.uk



Using the SOLIDWORKS Sell online product configuration solution, The Posh Shed Company has dramatically improved the online shed shopping experience, resulting in the ability to support tens of thousands of possible shed combinations.

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