Bath shower mixer represented with CATIA V6

Bath shower mixer – final product

Bath shower mixer installed – Sousse model

SOPAL
La Force de la Qualité

CATIA

3dvia

Moez Regayeg
Manager, SOPAL

SOPAL keeps pace with consumer trends thanks to V6 PLM Express and 3DVIA

By **Dora Laîné**

SOPAL chose V6 PLM Express and 3DVIA Composer to develop its line of faucets and plumbing equipment. With V6, SOPAL satisfies quickly changing market demand, delivering the right products to the right people at the right time.

R apid change in customer demand and taste is one of the hallmarks of the Consumer Goods industry. It is a sector where style and trends dominate. Home products such as faucets and plumbing features are no exception to the rule. Trends in faucet design often change from year to year, which is why companies in this sector must remain flexible and reactive to market demand.

"We are very careful to ensure that our products reflect and anticipate what is considered stylish in interior design," said Moez Regayeg, manager, SOPAL. "Knowing how to detect new trends and delivering products that address these changes is of prime importance. We have to present innovative products that

come "right to market and meeting expectations of the right people at the right time."

A COMPLETE AND INTEGRATED SOLUTION
To reinforce its leadership in Tunisia, SOPAL needed to replace its existing product development system with a more robust and flexible solution that would also boost innovation. The company selected V6 PLM Express for its entire development process. "We chose V6 because it covers all our needs in design, manufacturing, reverse engineering, and documentation management all on the same on-line collaborative platform," said Regayeg.

Some of SOPAL's products are considered staples and will always remain in its catalogue, while others will disappear completely to make room for newer models. "This is where managing the lifecycle of our products comes into play. We need a PLM system that keeps track of all information related to a product such as technical specifications, design data, regulatory constraints and sales, all based on one platform and accessible to everyone in the company with a need to know," commented Regayeg.

CATIA V6 attracted SOPAL's attention thanks to its superior handling of complex surfaces. "Styling requires the ability to work with complex shapes to give our products a distinctive and esthetically pleasing aspect," noted Regayeg. "CATIA V6 comes out on top whenever we need to create a unique form with ease and precision."

SOPAL viewed collaboration between its different departments and with subsidiaries as the only way to accelerate the development process and avoid mistakes. Whether it is the purchasing department requesting a new design or the production department asking to see how a product is assembled, SOPAL wanted all employees to have access to product data from anywhere when required. "During the development process, a design can be modified any number of times, which is why it is important that the single version of the truth be accessible to all employees in the company at all times," stated Regayeg.

3D PRODUCT EXPERIENCES WITH 3DVIA Composer
If a picture is worth a thousand words, an interactive 3D experience is worth much more. Using 3D design data from CATIA, 3DVIA Composer allows users to easily explode designs to show how they should be assembled, while checking for clashes and other common errors. The ability to quickly

and easily document the assembly process, and deliver it in an interactive 3D experience, complete with animated procedures, is why SOPAL chose 3DVIA Composer to enable it to show its production team how a faucet should be assembled. "We can also use 3D animation to explain to architects, construction companies or the final customer how our products should be installed and how they function," said Regayeg.

Aware that resistance to change can have an adverse effect on its business, SOPAL employees were included in the V6 evaluation process from the start before the final decision to go with this solution was made. "V6 was not imposed top-down. Work sessions were held between our designers and the DS project team, which resulted in our users selecting V6 themselves. The product basically sold itself," remarked Regayeg.

Dassault Systèmes is represented in Tunisia by PLM Systems, which provided SOPAL with support for installation and training. "It is important for us to have a local presence

>> We need a PLM system that keeps track of all information related to a product, based on one platform and accessible to everyone in the company with a need to know.

here in our country," said Regayeg. "PLM Systems helped us choose the solution that is right for us."

3DVIA MOBILE HELPS PROMOTE SOPAL PRODUCTS
SOPAL's product portfolio has been published on the www.3dvia.com website, Dassault Systèmes' online solution for searching, uploading and sharing ideas in 3D. "Even though we sell 80% of our production in Tunisia, our objective is to expand our reach to other countries. 3DVIA will help promote our products worldwide," said Regayeg. "We even went one step further with 3DVIA Mobile, which enables users to download and navigate actual 3D models of our products on their iPhone, for easier access to our portfolio" •

For more information:
www.sopal.com
www.plmsystems.net

More about SOPAL
Founded in 1981, Tunisia-based SOPAL designs and manufactures all types of faucets and valves for industrial as well as mass market use. Made of brass, SOPAL's products include mixers and faucets for baths, showers, washbasins and sinks, valves for cylinder gas installations as well as fittings for water and gas installations and volume water meters. Available as standard fixtures through its catalogue or built to order, SOPAL is certified ISO 9001 earning the company a solid reputation in Tunisia for its technical expertise. SOPAL employs 520 people and its two subsidiaries, which produce components for its faucets and valves, employ an additional 30 people in all.