

American Fastener

JOURNAL

VOLUME 28 / NO 1 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012



U.S. Fastener Report

Published monthly by the American Fastener Journal

PRSRTD STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #5405
Columbus, Ohio

American Fastener Journal
27081 N. 96th Way
Scottsdale, AZ 85262-8441
Change Service Requested



Publisher's Comments

TECHNOLOGY WILL BE KEY...

A year ago, I wrote about the exciting and challenging times ahead for the fastener industry, and I pointed out that technology holds the key to the future. In 2011, the times were indeed exciting and challenging, and technology has changed the fastener industry forever. In the past several years, technology has made it possible for the *American Fastener Journal* to introduce digital magazines. The AFJ has been digital for five years, the *American Fastener Source Guide* has been digital for four years, and the most recent issue of the *Aerospace Fasteners eZine* went digital in December 2011. But my real excitement is for our new publication, the U.S. *Fastener Report*. The cover story in this issue of AFJ provides all the details about this new, monthly, digital magazine.

There were several reasons why I introduced this new digital fastener magazine, but first among them was to reach a large group in the fastener industry that was previously overlooked. This is the support staff, the associates, or as I like to respectfully call them, "the worker bees." Please read the cover story: "What is this New U.S. Fastener Report I'm Hearing About?" Then, be sure to send in the email addresses for all your coworkers so they can start receiving a free U.S. *Fastener Report* in January 2012. Even if only six employees register from each American fastener company, the circulation will exceed 50,000 in a matter of a few months.

Dr. Lou Raymond has written a series of articles about "Installation Torque and Fatigue Performance of Threaded Fasteners," and they will be featured in the next five issues of the AFJ. Chuck Jacobs presents the happenings within the fastener industry in his popular series "Pulse of the Industry." Reading the PennEngineering article, you'll learn how they improved service and efficiency by using Thomas Industrial Network's new WebCAD. Jim Bannister has recapped the very successful National Industrial Fastener & Mill Supply Expo, with a positive outlook toward the 2012 show. Regular features by Zepol on import/export statistics, the AFJ Stock Index, the Economic Forecast and BidLink's report on the military fastener business leads us into a very interesting story about a new fastener called SnapIt™ Screw. At one time or another, we've all wished we had this screw available when it was most needed.

We are off and running and looking forward to a very busy 2012. Last year, we published a total of 11 issues. There were six issues of the AFJ, one buyer's guide (the annual *American Fastener Source Guide*), and four issues of the *Aerospace Fasteners eZine*. With the addition of 12 U.S. *Fastener Report* issues, we will have 23 publications this year.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, please call me at 480.488.3500, or email me at mmcguire@fastenerjournal.com.

Mike McGuire
Publisher/Editor

American Fastener JOURNAL

PUBLISHER/EDITOR Mike McGuire
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Jackie McGuire
ADVERTISING MANAGER Tom Massar
Massar Media
800.528.1164
PRODUCTION DESIGN Cyndi Daines
Rosier-Daines Inc.
614.899.6105
PRINTING Phil Baden
Robin Enterprises Co.
614.891.0250
WEB DESIGN Alpha Dog Inc.
www.alphadoginc.com
740.815.3044
WRITERS David Archer
Guy Avellon
Margot Crabtree
Dr. Jeff Dietrich
Charles F. Jacobs
Dr. Lou Raymond

ADVERTISING & EDITORIAL

All materials should be sent to:
American Fastener Journal
27081 N. 96th Way
Scottsdale, Arizona 85262-8441
480.488.3500
FAX 480.488.3247
www.fastenerjournal.com
E-mail: mmcguire@fastenerjournal.com
ISSN 1064-3834
★ Veteran Owned ★

SUBSCRIPTIONS

| | U.S. | CANADIAN & FOREIGN |
|---------|------|-----------------------|
| 1 Year | \$59 | \$ 98 |
| 2 Years | \$96 | \$159 |

Check or money order
for subscription may be sent to:

American Fastener Journal
27081 N. 96th Way • Scottsdale, Arizona 85262-8441

American Fastener Journal is published bi-monthly
on the following schedule:
Jan/Feb • Mar/Apr • May/Jun
Jul/Aug • Sep/Oct • Nov/Dec

POSTMASTER

Please send address changes to American Fastener Journal,
27081 N. 96th Way, Scottsdale, Arizona 85262-8441.
American Fastener Journal is mailed
via bulk rate from Columbus, Ohio.

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COMPANY



PROFILE

Fasteners are imperative to just about any item that requires industrial design and construction. They can be used in almost any application or market. Penn's target markets include consumer electronics, medical devices, marine and military projects. The company has grown since its founding, expanding well beyond its mainstay self-clinching fastener, to include hundreds of different fasteners under the PEM®, SI®, ATLAS®, STICKSCREW®, PEMSERTER®, 3V® and QRP™ brands. Design engineers comprise the largest part of Penn Engineering's target audience. They regularly request detailed specs that include CAD drawings to insert into their detailed and complex project designs.

CHALLENGE:

Improving the customer service process for fulfilling individual product spec requests

For almost 70 years, PennEngineering enjoyed steady, global growth, expanding through new product development and corporate acquisitions. The company enjoyed a steady stream of qualified leads coming in from many sources, including its presence on ThomasNet.com, through direct searches and through search engines.

Many of these requests included the need for part drawings and CAD models. The company was already using Thomas Industrial Network's Navigator platform, a web solution that allows customers to download CAD drawings and models or insert CAD models directly into their work as needed. However, the technology to obtain a complete print or sales drawing for a cataloged product was not in place yet, and the engineer would have to contact PennEngineering's technical support group. This process was time consuming for both Penn's technical support team and the user. Penn sought a way to save time and costs for both parties.

"We've always wanted to meet our customers' and prospects' needs quickly, but the process of providing product drawings was less than optimal," said PennEngineering Director

PennEngineering

Improves Customer Service, Receives Record Number of New Business Inquiries

Thomas Industrial Network Helps Fastener Manufacturer Leverage CAD Technology to Improve Service and Efficiency

PennEngineering is a global leader of industrial fastening solutions headquartered in Danboro, Pennsylvania, with manufacturing operations in the U.S., China and Ireland. They make specialty fasteners, including nuts, studs, standoffs, panel fasteners and other hardware. The company was founded in 1942 with a single, revolutionary product: a self-clinching fastener that secures to metal in one piece, without the need for additional loose hardware.

of Marketing Leon Attarian. "We needed a better, more efficient way to do this." Attarian sought a way to replicate the manual CAD process online, so his prospective customers could get the drawings they needed on their own terms, without requiring the precious time of PennEngineering's staff.

SOLUTION:

Thomas Industrial Network's new WebCAD technology gives PennEngineering's customers instant access to product drawings

Marketing Director Attarian immediately knew where to find a solution. He'd collaborated with Thomas Industrial Network to better service his customers many times before, including in the 1990s, when sharing CAD drawings on CD was considered avant-garde. It made sense to turn to a trusted and proven

partner, with whom they had already been working to drive qualified traffic to their website.

Working closely with a team of design engineers and experts at Thomas Industrial Network, Attarian implemented a significant upgrade to WebCAD, resulting in a much more powerful and robust solution. In addition to a complete library of 2D and 3D CAD models and drawings, now prospective customers can also download sales drawings with complete product specifications. A search feature was also installed, which can drill to a specific product within PennEngineering's online catalog. Customers can quickly find precisely the part they need, out of thousands of unique items.

On the website, prospective buyers can search through thousands of technical drawings of PennEngineering's items by part name, category or part number. From there, engineers can self serve, compare choices side-by-side, find and download the exact parts they need in the 2D or 3D format they require, insert them into their designs right away, and immediately assess the fit. The technology is especially attractive because it is CAD vendor agnostic. Users can choose the CAD system of choice from a drop-down menu that includes AutoCAD, SolidWorks, Inventor and others. Then all they have to do is hit "go" to download a model of the part directly into their design.

RESULTS:

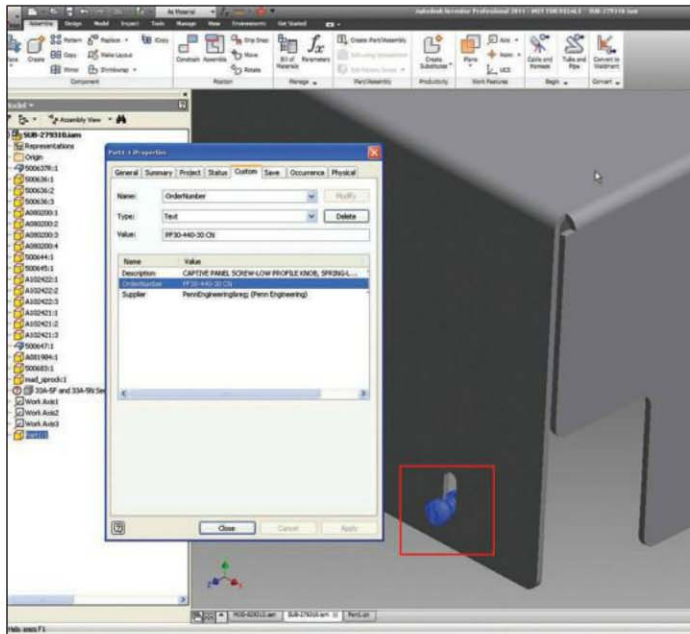
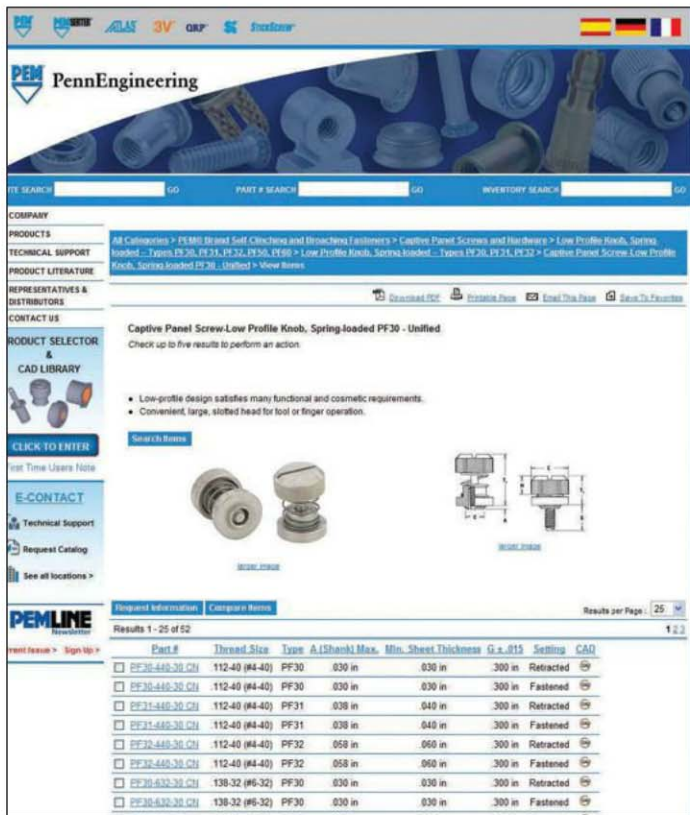
Record numbers of new business inquiries are handled efficiently and accurately

Since embracing ThomasNet's WebCAD, PennEngineering is logging more new business inquiries month after month, in the form of CAD downloads from their website. In fact, the volume of CAD downloads and inserts nearly doubled within seven months of implementation and continues to increase in volume. Company sales reps verify the technology's success, with a slew of new business leads since going live.

The screenshot displays the PennEngineering WebCAD interface. At the top, there's a logo and the text 'PennEngineering'. Below that, there are search filters for 'Dxf File (*.dxf)' and 'Inventor >= 5.3'. There are buttons for 'Download', 'Email', and 'Insert (Optional)'. A central 3D model of a fastener is shown with various view options on the left and right. Below the model, there are options to 'Select another View' with icons for '2D Front View', '2D Top View', and '2D Sales Drawing'. At the bottom, there is a 'Bill of Material' table.

| Item # | Description | Supplier |
|----------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| PF30-440-30 CN | CAPTIVE PANEL SCREW-LOW PROFILE KNOB, SPRING-LOADED PF30 - UNIFIED | PennEngineering® (Penn Engineering) |

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It's no wonder that customers enjoy the instant gratification of identifying just the right product drawing, and the real-time ability to manipulate it to their needs. The technology instantly lets customers be more productive and has the added benefit of minimizing the risk of errors that can come from manual drawings. It has provided multiple efficiencies for PennEngineering as well. Thomas Industrial Network's WebCAD technology allows the manufacturer to provide consistent product information to all of its global customers, in a common, brand-ed format.

"No matter where you're working, CAD is a universal language for engineers," Attarian said. "It transcends language barriers and needs no translation."

This consistency helps the manufacturers protect their intellectual property from being exploited, which is a key concern, especially for leading brand manufacturers. Each CAD download comes with a detailed bill of materials that includes everything from the manufacturer's name to part specifications and measurements. For complex projects with multiple manufacturers and distributors with different roles, this simplifies the purchasing process and ensures everyone involved is able to facilitate the correct order accurately, the first time. It also ensures PennEngineering is credited as the source for the fastener and can.

Another important benefit to PennEngineering is that it frees up the manufacturer's highly skilled resources to focus on other strategic initiatives for clients. These initiatives might be driven by data about customer preferences collected through WebCAD usage. The company can now measure the acceptance of new product introductions and identify design trends through the number of downloads. They collect the name, title and company information of prospective buyers before permitting downloads, allowing them to build a new business development list.

"In addition to solving our customer service issues and helping us field a record number of inquiries, Thomas Industrial Network has given us an incredible database of information," Attarian said. "This will help us drive other initiatives at the company that require the use of this massive amount of product data and specifications. With this tool, the data is already in place and easily accessible for other projects. All of this translates to helping us better compete and grow in the future."

Another key element of the upgrade to WebCAD is the ability for PennEngineering to push content to its authorized distributors. They, too, can incorporate WebCAD into their own websites, allowing them to offer the same information Penn does within the framework of their sites. WebCAD also has an administrative tool that allows Attarian and his team to modify it and create customized reports to measure activity and effectiveness.

"When we add new products or modify specifications, the distributors will also benefit," Attarian said. "These changes will be made automatically to their PEM® product offerings as well. This also strengthens our global branding initiative." ■

For more information, contact:

Leon Attarian
 PennEngineering
 Director of Global Marketing
 215.766.8853 Ext.1157
 Email: lattarian@penn-eng.com
 www.pennet.com

Linda Rigano
 Executive Director, Strategic Services
 Thomas Industrial Network, Inc.
 5 Penn Plaza, 8th Floor
 New York, New York 10001
 Direct line: 212.629.1522
 Email: LRigano@Thomasnet.com