

Grand River Group Publishes Accurate Catalogs in Half the Time with Arbortext® from PTC

China's #1 Motorcycle Producer Saves Time & Cost While Improving Customer Service

Grand River Group, Jiangmen City, China

Founded in 1991, Grand River Group is China's top motorcycle manufacturer. Focused on research & development, manufacturing and sales, Grand River Group supplies motorcycles and parts to both domestic and foreign markets. The company is known for its rigorous commitment to quality, and is currently the only domestic Chinese motorcycle enterprise to fully meet all international quality standards. Grand River Group sells its products across China, and exports to more than 70 countries. From 2003 to 2006 the company doubled its production and sales, producing 2.2 million motorcycles last year alone.

Grand River Group employs more than 9,000 people and works with 500 assistant plants and over 7,000 distributors. For the past four years, Grand River Group has been named one of the Top 500 Chinese Enterprises.

The Challenge: Increase Accuracy, Reduce Publication Lifecycle and Costs

Over the last 15 years, the motorcycle market in China has become increasingly crowded and competitive. To retain its place as market leader, Grand River Group focused on supplying parts as a growth strategy. This strategy meant that accurate parts catalogs are now an essential component of the company's value proposition. However, it quickly became clear that the company's manual publishing and editing system couldn't keep pace with the constant changes from market-driven design innovations. Nor could manual publishing keep track of outsourced parts information. The catalogs quickly became obsolete, and each publishing lifecycle was a lengthy 25 days. Inaccurate catalogs led to incorrect part orders, which became a customer service concern.

The Solution: PTC's Arbortext Dynamic Publishing System

Aware that its current documentation process was inadequate, Grand River Group implemented PTC's Arbortext software, a dynamic publishing solution that automatically creates and updates catalogs from BOM data stored in a product development system (PDS). This automated process eliminates mistakes that can occur when data is manually transferred from a PDS to a catalog, and it greatly reduces the publishing lifecycle by making the layout and correction processes obsolete. Arbortext also automatically formats catalogs for multiple media—such as print and Web—from the same template.



The Results: Accurate Parts Catalogs in Less Than Half the Time

After implementing PTC's Arbortext dynamic publishing solution, Grand River Group began producing parts catalogs that were more accurate and up-to-date. By using Arbortext to gather information directly from PTC's Windchill® PDM (product data management) system, part catalogs were updated in real-time and automatically incorporated accurate outsourced part information. Arbortext also enabled Grand River Group to publish catalogs in English or Chinese, as needed. The publishing lifecycle was reduced from 25 days to 10 days, and the company can now create three parts catalogs per week. By the end of 2007, Grand River Group expects to offer its customers 50 different parts catalogs—more than double the number of its closest competitor!

“PTC's solution was exactly what we needed to improve our business processing.”

- Deng Xiaoli,
Manager of Parts Department,
Grand River Group

Going Beyond High-quality Products

When dozens of domestic competitors flooded the Chinese motorcycle market in the 1990's, Grand River Group focused both on high-quality products and international customers to retain its position as the market leader. Recently, however, Grand River Group recognized that parts supply could also be a differentiating growth market.

This shift in product development required not only a stronger focus on part development, but also a new emphasis on documentation. With hundreds of products going through the manufacturing lifecycle—from design to outsourced partners to prototype testing to production—Grand River Group faced the challenge of documenting products on a larger scale than ever before. Although they had the systems in place to quickly produce many new and exciting products, creating innovative parts meant nothing if they weren't documented and shown to customers in a timely manner. The customers needed proof of these innovations, and proof came in the form of parts catalogs.

The Drawbacks of Traditional Publishing

As Grand River Group attempted to document parts using their current publishing system, the company quickly found that part amendments lagged behind the data being updated in their product development system. On top of part changes, new products were constantly being produced to keep pace with the competitive marketplace. Manually updating catalogs created both a large workload and an opportunity for frequent human error, which in turn increased costs. Despite leading the industry in quality, Grand River Group's parts catalogs—essential sales tools—were lagging behind the actual parts. The company needed its documentation process to operate at the same level as its manufacturing, or Grand River Group risked losing its edge on the competition.

A Partnership with PTC

Grand River Group first started working with PTC in 2006 when the company implemented Windchill, PTC's advanced product development solution. The integration of Windchill with the company's original ERP system was completed in only three months—an industry record. Because Arbortext offers an integral connection with Windchill, it was the most efficient software choice for Grand River Group. Arbortext reads XML content from Windchill, the content management system and automatically creates or updates documents from that data. This automated process eliminates human error in the publishing phase and allows time—traditionally spent on layouts and formatting—to be used for content creation and management. After implementing Arbortext, Grand River Group had a fully integrated system that tracked each product from the very first design to the description in a parts catalog.

Completely Satisfied: More Efficient Publishing, Better Customer Service

With Arbortext in place, Grand River Group can now give its customers up-to-date catalogs detailing the company's cutting-edge products. The publishing lifecycle was reduced by more than half, from 25 days to 10 days, and the volume of catalogs Grand River Group is capable of publishing increased dramatically. These improvements lowered costs and increased efficiency. Now, instead of concentrating on time-consuming details like typos and layout issues, employees can focus on content management, leaving the nitty-gritty work to Arbortext.

With Arbortext, Grand River Group enjoys an entirely new level of publishing functionality. The company can produce documents in multiple languages and media for different audiences, and can automatically create lists of similar parts or part updates.

Superior functionality and flexibility are crucial in the Chinese motorcycle industry, where competition has reached an all-time high. Using Arbortext to keep customers informed of its most recent innovations will keep Grand River Group at the top of its industry.