



Ace Manufacturing, www.ace-mfg.com, an industry leader and manufacturer of automotive clutches and clutch components is known throughout the automotive industry as an innovator in clutch technology. The company has been in business for over 40 years, and during that time has developed full design, manufacturing and testing capabilities. Ace Manufacturing's 118,000 square foot facility is equipped with an in-house machine shop that employs over 60 metal working professionals. The company produces clutches and clutch parts to original equipment specifications and is located in the Midwest, about 60 miles west of St. Louis Missouri.



In the fall of 2011, Alex Settles Lead Design Engineer was looking for ways to resolve communications issues within his R&D environment. The team used R&D sheets and email to track design and production issues, but someone was always out of the loop and things constantly fell through the cracks or just lagged behind schedule. Some project teams also used Microsoft Project, but found it difficult to keep the project plan up to date and that Microsoft Project did not help at keeping people up to date or in the loop. It was then that Settles learned about Vuuch, an enterprise social software solution. "While Vuuch was presented to me as a product development solution, I'm using it as more of a communications and accountability tool. We've deployed Vuuch within R&D and currently have about 40 people connected through Vuuch across the company. Vuuch can be used to track progress on anything within the company," Settles said.

One of the more critical uses of Vuuch is tracking Ace Manufacturing R&D sheets for materials management and parts production. “Before we adopted Vuuch, the Production department would make a new part, and sometimes it would just get lost in the shuffle. Now, everyone knows when a part has been produced. We also use Vuuch for price quoting non-standard parts and assemblies. What used to take up to 15 emails for the quoting process is now reduced to a single Vuuch page,” he said.

Day to day, the most common use of Vuuch, and one of its biggest benefits, is to track product design changes, and how these affect orders and inventory tracking. “Vuuch helps the team track design changes from the start, and provides a roadmap for what steps need to happen to reach production and delivery. Before Vuuch we spent two to three hours a week, meeting with four to eight people to discuss design changes and production issues – Vuuch has cut the time we spend in these meetings in half. This alone has more than paid for the cost of Vuuch,” Settles said.

“It’s the same for tracking tooling, where purchasing, engineering and upper management needs to stay informed. Any thing anyone needs to know is now just one click away in Vuuch.”

As for deploying Vuuch at Ace Manufacturing, Settles explained that it was so easy, we started with a single project but quickly added every project and before we knew it Vuuch was keeping 40 employees in sync. “It’s a hidden gem, and it does much more than help us communicate better. For example, I used to have to use a separate service to email large CAD files to purchasing reps, suppliers and customers, and hope the files arrived in full and not corrupted in any way. With Vuuch, I routinely share up to 100MB files with no problems. Vuuch quickly spread across the company and it is now starting to connect to our suppliers and partners,” he said.