

A FULLY INTEGRATED SOLUTION

Spacesaver was one of Configura's first customers in the United States. The initial contract was signed in 2001; today, over 300 people around the world use Configura software to specify Spacesaver products.

Spacesaver was founded as a paper storage company in 1972. As electronic storage began to replace paper, the company evolved to manufacturing storage solutions for such diverse items as clothing, kegs of beer and even torpedoes.

Spacesaver uses Configura's original software, Configura. Over the years, the company has customized its Configura software to meet evolving needs.

The person at Spacesaver who today manages the Configura solution is Ron Chisholm. With a background in electrical engineering, product management and automation, Ron landed the role of sales configuration manager at Spacesaver four years ago.

"My role is cross-functional. I handle everything that has to do with Configura," Ron said. "I constantly need to have my ears and eyes open to what our business is doing and make sure our Configura software accommodates these different needs."

In his role, Ron is a part of the new product development branch of the company but also works a lot with the salespeople who use Configura as a sales tool.

"Nobody knows exactly what this program can ultimately progress into, so it's hard to put it into a category," Ron said. "It's a sales tool that lets you draw and price products, so you'd think the sales department should own it. However, we decided to put the development of Configura in our product development department and it seems to be working well. It makes it easy for us to see what new products need to be added before a release."



CASE STUDY: **SPACESAVER**

"Look at storage a whole new way" is Spacesaver's mantra. This innovative steel manufacturing company based in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, USA, makes space-planning solutions – including shelving, storage and mobile carriages – for education, military, healthcare, general business and, most recently, industrial markets.

Spacesaver sells its products through more than 50 distributors in North America, Europe and Australia. Each of these distributors varies in size and product offering, but what they all have in common is that 100 percent of their orders go through Configura.



Why Spacesaver invested in the Configura solution

Spacesaver's history spans more than 43 years. In the early years, Spacesaver salespeople drafted the "traditional way" with paper and pencils. The company eventually progressed into using AutoCAD before deciding to invest in a solution by Configura. The jump to using Configura software enabled Spacesaver distributors to quickly draw and price configurations without relying on Spacesaver personnel.

Spacesaver's vice president of finance initiated the first investment in Configura software about 14 years ago.

"The initial plan was to do a small investment and stop at that," Ron said. "Of course, we soon realized that was a miscalculation because Configura has turned into our preferred tool. It's become an ongoing investment that we can't live without."

Once Spacesaver saw what Configura could do, company leaders decided to invest even more in their Configura solution. The time-zone difference between the United States and Sweden was enough reason to bring over a Configura programmer to work onsite at Spacesaver. The initiative definitely paid off.

"Whenever we had questions, we could go right to Daniel Augustsson, which was a very nice change," Ron said. "He has done a tremendous job in understanding our products and the language we use."

Since then, Configura has opened an office in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA, where Daniel is now based. He still works on Spacesaver's Configura solution from this office. The time difference is no longer an issue, and Ron and Daniel stay in close contact through daily Skype calls.

Ron Chisholm, Sales Configuration Manager at Spacesaver Corporation.

How Spacesaver uses the Configura solution

Today, nearly all Spacesaver products can be drawn with Configura, although there are a few products that the company has deliberately chosen not to enter into the program.

However, 100 percent of Spacesaver orders need to go through the Configura software, which means that all distributors who want to sell Spacesaver products must have a Configura software license. In fact, it's even written into their contracts.

"Our initial goal for how to use Configura was to put laptops in salespersons' hands and let them draw in front of customers," Ron said. "Some of our salespeople have embraced this way of working, but over the years we've realized that with the way we sell our products, it works better for us to let the salespeople focus on the art of selling and then use Configura as a planning and order tool."

As a result, Spacesaver has chosen to customize the solution even further by investing in developing more tools for manufacturing and order handling. This flexibility is just one of the reasons why Ron believes that Configura software is unique.

"One of the strengths is that the software is intuitive, so you don't need a lot of training," Ron said.

After 14 years of collaborating with Configura, Spacesaver has a solid solution that is fully integrated with its business.

"We're very happy with our cooperation with Configura. We've received a lot of support from both the management side and with the programmer who has been assigned to us," Ron said. "Configura has been very engaged, so it's been a partnership that has been very easy to work with."

Gary Hartman, Machine Operator - Mobile at Spacesaver Corporation.

