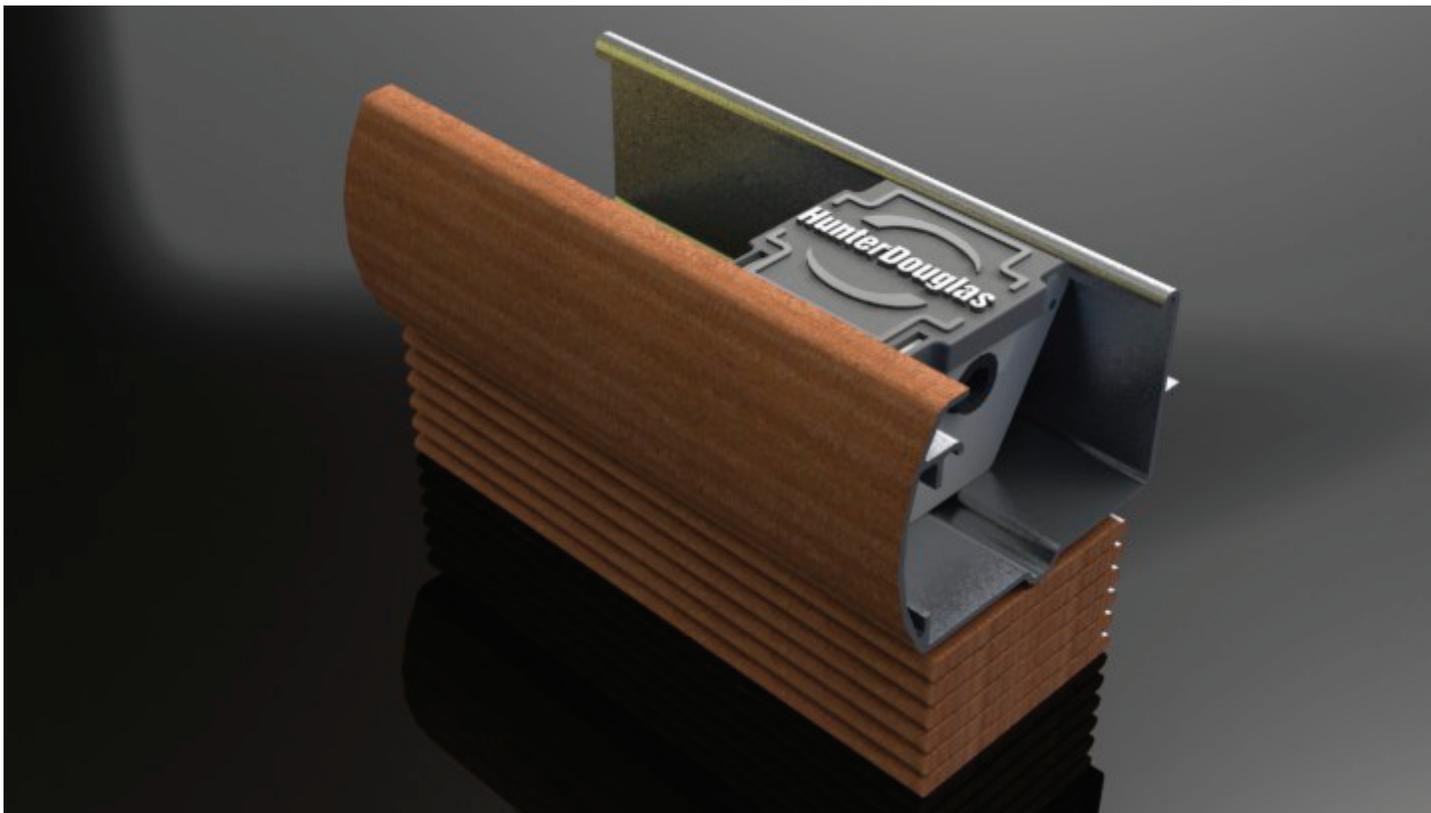


# HUNTER DOUGLAS

## Opening horizontal blind design to efficiency and innovation with SolidWorks



Ask anyone, “Who makes the best window blinds?”, and there’s a good chance the answer will be “Hunter Douglas.”

The company has produced blinds, shades, and window coverings for more than 60 years, and has become the leading manufacturer of custom-made window fashions in North America. Since its inception, Hunter Douglas has focused on excellence in product development, and is recognized throughout the industry for design innovation and product quality.

With that reputation comes the responsibility to build the best and stand behind it, according to Byron Morgan, a design engineer with Hunter Douglas Horizontal Blinds Division. “We have a lifetime guarantee on our products, so we are driven to produce something that is not going to break,” Morgan explains. “We take that commitment seriously at the Horizontal Blinds Division, and Solidworks is a critical tool for helping us sustain this commitment.”

While many other divisions within Hunter Douglas use another 3D package, the Horizontal Blinds Division prefers SolidWorks® Premium design and analysis software. “SolidWorks is the only tool that we use because it allows us to develop innovative, high-quality products faster and more cost-effectively,” Morgan says. “We are three times faster developing models in SolidWorks than with other packages we have evaluated, and the models that we produce are easier to modify and less costly to manufacture.”

The Hunter Douglas Horizontal Blinds Division prefers SolidWorks software, which it has used since 2004, because the software is easy to use, intuitive, and includes powerful mold design and analysis tools, including capabilities for evaluating draft and wall thickness. While some Hunter Douglas parts are machined, many are injection-molded.

*The Hunter Douglas Horizontal Blinds Division depends on SolidWorks Premium software to efficiently develop its industry-leading, high-quality products.*

### Challenge:

Improve quality, boost efficiency, and increase innovation in the development of high-end horizontal blinds.

### Solution:

Implement SolidWorks Premium design and analysis software.

### Results:

- Cut tooling costs by 66 percent
- Completes modeling three times faster
- Reduced prototyping costs
- Improved quality and increased innovation

"The Horizontal Blinds Division is a center of productivity and innovation at Hunter Douglas," Morgan adds. "Our production value, in terms of dollars per seat, is tremendous. We simply get more capability with SolidWorks for a lot less cost."

### Developing products with confidence

The Horizontal Blinds Division relies on SolidWorks software to develop the intricate components that create motion, such as raising, lowering, locking, and tilting the system, as well as extrusions for shape and strength. "All of our components have to fit within a space that's the size of a matchbox," Morgan says. "There's a centrifugal governor, a one-way clutch, a Bendix with a delayed spin, drag, brakes, and several sets of gears and springs. Everything is extremely small, and our standard tolerance is plus or minus 0.005 of an inch.

"SolidWorks gives me the freedom to take a basic concept, and in a few hours I've modeled something that I'm confident will work," he continues. "I can take that design into a review with Marketing, Production, and Management, and use SolidWorks to interactively tweak the design. With everyone gathered around my computer, I can incorporate their suggestions and input. Everyone can actually see how the design will look in a homeowner's window, and I can gradually morph the design into what everyone wants. That's really powerful."

### Design for production

Using SolidWorks software, the Horizontal Blinds Division has reduced prototyping and cut tooling costs on its products by two-thirds because the software includes tools for assessing manufacturability and outputs production-ready parts. "SolidWorks lets us address draft and incorporate undercuts from the very first sketch," Morgan notes. "The software allows us to resolve draft and molding issues rather than leaving them to the moldmaker, who in many cases does not understand the function of the part.

"It can cost as much as \$500,000 to retool, so delivering production-quality designs saves a lot of money," Morgan stresses. "When you design for production, you have more time and resources for improving existing products and innovating new concepts."

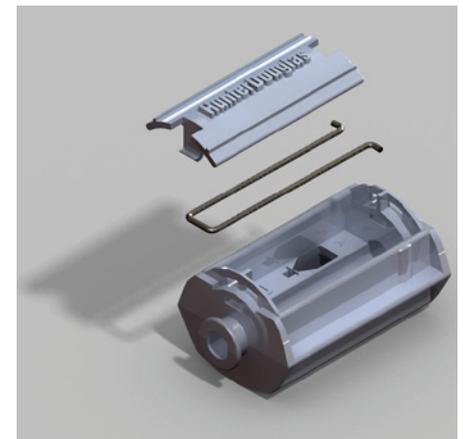
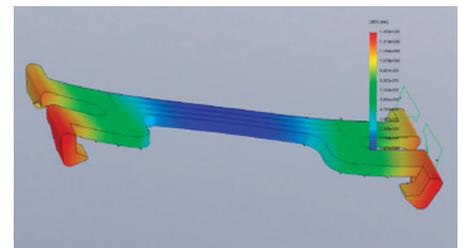
### Better quality, greater innovation

The design-for-manufacturability and visualization capabilities in SolidWorks help the Horizontal Blinds Division consistently deliver higher-quality products and introduce industry innovations. For example, Hunter Douglas has developed horizontal blinds with lifting systems that don't utilize traditional chords at all. SolidWorks animations and PhotoView 360 renderings facilitate communication in the development of new products.

"With SolidWorks, I have the visualization tools that I need to serve as a liaison between Design, Engineering, and Marketing," Morgan says. "A rendering or an animation can answer questions, such as 'Does it work?' or 'Will people like it?' At Hunter Douglas, we make the best, most innovative blinds in the industry. SolidWorks helps us maintain and extend our market position."

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Byron Morgan  
Design Engineer



Using SolidWorks design, visualization, and simulation tools, Hunter Douglas has improved the manufacturability of its products, reducing prototyping iterations and tooling costs.

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