

Corporate

UGS aims at more business with vendors

Our Bureau
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UGS, a leading US-based global provider product lifecycle management (PLM) software has worked with a slew of India automotive OEMs including Maruti Udyog, Mahindra & Mahindra and Ford India.

The company has provided its software for Ford India's Fiesta project and as also for the work being done in connection with Maruti's new diesel engine plant that goes on stream by the end of this calendar. A UGS source said that with PLM software one can actually go through the entire plant in virtual space.

At a recent seminar, officials from UGS which has a product development centre in India said the company was bullish on

India in the context of the fact that passenger cars and MUVs are expected to record significant growth rates.

It said that using its PLM software can help OEMs significantly reduce the development time required for products. With Indian OEMs rationalising their vendor bases from an estimated 400 and odd to 250, the opportunities for PLM software were only expected to rise.

Many of these 250 suppliers are tier one suppliers, who have to increasingly get involved with doing design and development work for components that they supply to the OEMs. With vendors increasingly having to shoulder more work, and vendor content increasing in areas such as chassis, drivetrain, engine assembly, body structure etc, PLM has a key role to play.

With an estimated 7000 employees worldwide, and 46,000 clients, UGS suite of software products includes NX considered the new standard in CAD to design and build new vehicles, and Teamcenter.

In his keynote address, Prahlada Rao, Head-Programme Management, M&M said that OEMs increasingly need to see the link between customers and the supplier base. This is perhaps, not being done and not done sufficiently. The challenge of the future, Rao said, is to integrate the supplier base as OEMs move increasingly from part level to systems supply. This, he said, is the strategy that companies will have to focus on.

UGS's software has already been used to digitize the Bolero production process and well as for Tata Motors. PLM software can typi-

cally be used in design, manufacturing, process and supplier base, the choice of which depends on the OEM concerned.

In Chennai, Senthil Sabapathy, Manager, Engineering Services, Ford India spoke about the PLM and how Ford uses it. He said, 'Targets for products' creation are established by the OEMs usually through market surveys. From the inputs of the surveys the deci-

sion is taken on what product mix is required - segment wise and attribute wise. The time to market the new product can be reduced through various enablers some of which are commonisation, effective change management, knowledge transfer, etc. One way to accelerate things on this front is PLM. Suppliers on the other hand face challenges with competing priorities such as which OEM to cater to first and to what degree.

This is where a proper understanding of processes of the OEM is essential if one is to manage change, project management and hence the need for integrating all the processes of product creation. Moreover, different OEMs use different PDM and CAD systems that make it difficult for suppliers to provide the necessary support effectively.

About his company's PLM initiatives Sabhapathy said, 'Ford's PLM is a natural evolution from its current corporate strategy for product data management to a best-in-class integrated product delivery system. This ensures that all design data users - including partners, joint ventures, and suppliers - can access automatic and early use of the most up-to-date design data available, accommodating their use of multiple CAD and product data management tools.'