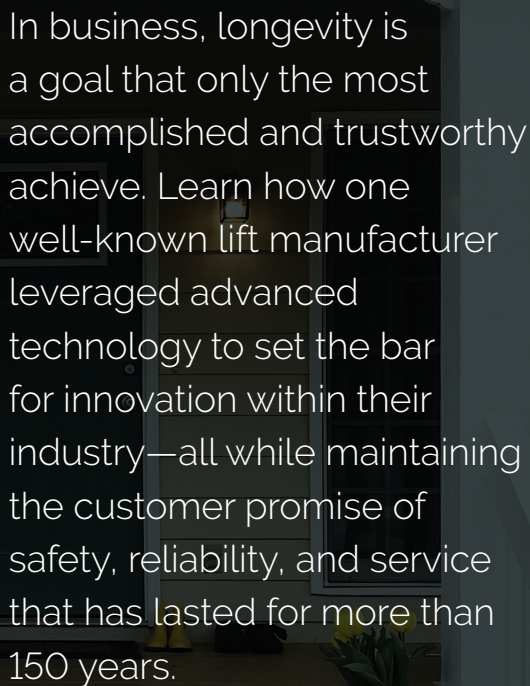# Stannah turns to PTC's Vuforia technology to improve the customer experience and stay true to their promise

Transforming the customer experience with Augmented Reality, Computer-Aided Design,and Product Lifecycle Management

In business, longevity is a goal that only the most accomplished and trustworthy achieve. Learn how one well-known lift manufacturer leveraged advanced technology to set the bar for innovation within their industry—all while maintaining the customer promise of safety, reliability, and service that has lasted for more than 150 years.

Stannah has a rich history, deeply rooted in community and family

The Stannah Group is in the business of keeping the world moving. It is a family-owned group of companies dedicated to the design, production, and service of residential and commercial lifts. Stannah's history dates back to 1867, when they began making cranes and hoists for the booming London docks. Today, the company name is synonymous with residential stairlifts, and its commitment to serving the community has never wavered.

The company now employs more than 2,000 workers across the globe, including members from three generations of the Stannah family actively involved in management. Above all else, Stannah promises its customers safety, reliability, and service.

Stannah   ◆ **ptc**

A focus on customer needs presents an opportunity to improve the buying experience

In its given line of work, Stannah often serves residential customers who are facing mobility challenges, which presents some unique obstacles in the sales and service process. For many buyers, a residential stairlift is a significant investment, and they may be unsure how the product works, what it will look like, and how it will impact their daily living space.

What's more, the sales team often has to liaise customers' family members, so there can be many layers of communication, which can create challenges in identifying core needs. To add to these challenges, COVID-19 has made many customers wary of having sales and service teams in their homes, which impacts the personal nature of face-to-face trust-building. "What's really important when we do a customer visit is building trust by understanding their needs and whether or not a product fits," explains Ross Pascoe, Chief Technology and Design Officer at Stannah.

As a customer-focused company, Stannah wanted to provide the best sales experience possible to put the customer at ease, and knew that with the right technology, they could significantly improve the buying experience.

Stannah leverages Vuforia Engine to improve customer confidence

For several years, Stannah had explored augmented reality (AR) as a solution for providing clarity to customers during the sales cycle. They initially created an AR app to help customers visualize finished products—a groundbreaking solution at the time. As technology continued to evolve, though, Stannah realized there was

an even greater opportunity for continued development using AR as a powerful tool.

As a long-time PTC customer, Stannah decided to explore Vuforia Engine, PTC's market-leading AR solution. "Knowing our road map and our aspirations, it seemed like a natural fit to start working with PTC again," says Charles Symonds, Digital Projects Development Manager at Stannah, of the decision to pursue the project with the AR team. Leveraging Vuforia Engine, they created an updated customer-centric tool that could be used by sellers during the sales cycle to help potential buyers visualize a residential stairlift in their home.

The new application, called Envisage, provides a fast, non-intrusive way for a customer to visualize a custom stairlift in the context of their own home. It takes all the guesswork out of a life-changing purchase and simplifies the process for both the customer and the Stannah team. "The more time

you're entrenched in an application or a survey tool that isn't optimally designed, that's time you're not focusing on what the customer needs," says Pascoe. "That was a big driver with the upgrade of Envisage—we don't want to lose engagement with the customer, and introducing markerless technology has really helped us streamline our process."

Using advanced AR capabilities in Vuforia Engine, Envisage creates a digital 3D rendering of a stairlift and shows it on top of a customer's actual staircase in real time. Envisage shows the lift's various movements and positions and allows the customer to customize their lift with different upholstery fabrics and designs. A customer just needs to request a consultation from a Stannah sales representative, who can show them a personalized stairlift in their home in real time or take a photo of the image to later show a family member. At the end of the process, the customer can see a complete image of their specified choices, including rail, carriage, chair colors, and fabrics.

With a recent February 2021 release, the team expects Envisage to produce positive results in many exciting ways. Among the most important aspects, they expect to increase purchase confidence with customers by providing a clear understanding of exactly how the stairlift will function in their home. "Augmented reality helps alleviate the hurdles of a new purchase and answers the questions that customers have," says Symonds. "We can use AR to explain the product features, and we can show the clear benefits to them rather than focusing on their challenges that led them here." Additionally, communication with extended family will become easier when end users can see photos of the AR stairlift in the context of their own homes.

"Augmented reality helps alleviate the hurdles of a new purchase and answers the questions that customers have."

Charles Symonds

Digital Projects Development Manager, Stannah

Envisage will set Stannah apart from competitors with its usability and high quality grounded in Vuforia Engine technology. The Envisage application is completely markerless—while many other AR-powered apps rely on markers, or built-in visual cues that trigger the display of the digital information. Envisage simply provides a faster experience and takes almost no time to set up, making the customer experience easy, less intrusive, and more reliable.

A natural extension of Stannah's multi-year digital transformation strategy

Envisage is part of a multi-year, digital roadmap that leverages PTC's computer-aided design (CAD), product lifecycle management (PLM), and augmented reality solutions. The combination of best-in-class technology enables Stannah to guarantee design quality into every product and process.

As the foundation of their digital thread, Stannah has adopted Windchill for PLM and Creo for 3D CAD to create and manage all stairlift product-related data. The engineering team relies on Creo for 3D design of its continuously evolving product portfolio. To help them compress design cycles, explore more concepts, and identify optimal solutions faster, Stannah has adopted real-time simulation fully integrated into their Creo design environment and powered by Ansys technology. The company's CAD data is repurposed to create manuals, service updates, and bulletins. And with the Envisage project, that data is essential to providing a lifelike AR experience based on actual product specifications.

They also rely on PTC's Windchill solution to bring governance and traceability to the product development process. Stannah is working toward rolling out the next stage of its enterprise-wide PLM journey, which will eventually link product data with its homegrown enterprise resource

planning (ERP) and customer relationship management (CRM) solutions.

A promise to their customers remains at the core of Stannah's vision

As Stannah continues to expand their e-commerce journey, they are eager to leverage the long-term partnership with PTC to incorporate new tools and technologies into the customer experience. "We've spent a lot of time with PTC just getting to know our business, because it's not just about the technical solution—it's about

the problems that we're trying to solve with the business," says Pascoe. "PTC really understands what pain points we have."

Stannah is a company deeply rooted in history, family, and dedication to eliminating those pain points for its customers. As proven pioneers in their field, technology will continue to lead the path toward new products and features, but their promise of safety, reliability, and service will keep them grounded in the community that has come to know them well.

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