

Franke Group

Customer Success Story

Autodesk® Inventor®  
Autodesk® AliasStudio™

We have chosen the right products from the Autodesk Digital Prototyping product portfolio. With them, we create 3D CAD models, high-end visualizations and animations, simulation results, and rapid prototyping models.

—Christian Sperka  
CIO  
Franke

# Keeping Creativity Flowing

Franke Group uses Digital Prototyping solutions from Autodesk to make innovative designs a reality.



## Project Summary

When it comes to kitchen products, the Franke Group (Franke) is one of the world's top companies. In fact, the Franke name is found on more than 50 million kitchen sinks worldwide. The company has built its success on a combination of beauty and selection, offering more than 1,000 sink models along with a wide selection of hoods, fixtures, and other kitchen accessories. Offering so many choices means that Franke must get the most out of its global design team. It does that by providing them with design tools from Autodesk that support creativity and efficiency. With Autodesk® Inventor® as its core design tool and Autodesk® AliasStudio™ for conceptual design and visualization, Franke is:

- Improving collaboration capabilities with more standardized data
- Completing significantly more stainless-steel sink designs each year
- Making more informed decisions earlier in the product development process

## The Challenge

At the beginning of the millennium, Franke decided it was time to move toward a more standardized design process that used a single tool for core tasks. Until that point, the company's many designers used a number of applications, making it difficult to share designs across the company.

Franke considered a number of options in its search for the right application, in the process outlining some key requirements. The company wanted to take advantage of Digital Prototyping to enhance and accelerate processes such as stainless-steel sink design. Ease-of-use and the ability to get designers trained quickly were also important. Additionally, the chosen software had to have a large existing user base, because Franke anticipated many new design hires to keep pace with strong growth.

The company chose to implement Autodesk Inventor because it met Franke's requirements. Franke attributes the move towards standardization as being key to the overall success of the initiative as well.

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Markus Jirka, Franke Group CAX manager, explains, "Before we implemented the Inventor solution, we first created a centralized, design methodology for the new 3D CAD system, defining the necessary standards and guidelines to ensure a uniform approach across the entire Franke Group. Without a uniform design method, we may just as well have continued to use multiple CAD systems in parallel."

### The Solution

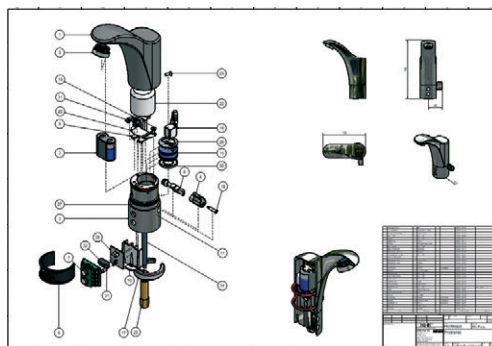
Franke is benefiting from its well-mapped approach to implementing Digital Prototyping with Autodesk Inventor as the foundation. Today, for example, Inventor supports all stages of product development at Franke Kitchen Systems.

From conceptual design through production, the kitchen system design team can take advantage of 3D models as they work. These 3D models function as digital prototypes that help users to simulate and analyze how a design will work under real-world conditions. By using digital prototypes, designers can refine the product before—or without—creating a physical prototype.

### Digital Prototyping Saves Time

Stainless steel sink design helps illustrate the advantages of working from a 3D model or digital prototype. Metal, such as steel, presents more design challenges than synthetic materials because of the complex way it flows during production. Franke uses Autodesk Inventor in conjunction with a third-party solution that simulates a metal-forming process called deep drawing. With Inventor, designers can quickly optimize digital prototypes based on the simulations.

Christian Bomatter, deep drawing expert and development manager at Franke, notes that the Inventor-driven process is significantly better and faster than



older, more manual methods. "In those days, we had to limit ourselves to three or four projects, and keep experimenting and making adjustments before we were able to achieve the desired stainless steel sink of the specified quality," he says. "Today, these optimization loops are done virtually in Inventor after the appropriate simulations have been completed."

### Visualizing Products Sooner

In addition to Autodesk Inventor, Franke uses Autodesk AliasStudio software. AliasStudio delivers sketching, modeling, and concept visualization tools that allow designers to capture ideas digitally. Using AliasStudio, Franke's product designers create realistic representations of design concepts in the earliest phases of product development. The company uses these concepts to make decisions about which product variations to develop when it launches new product lines.

"Using Alias software makes a lot of sense in situations where early decisions have to be made," says Franke CIO Christian Sperka. "We can visualize new concepts very realistically in an appropriate environment. The concepts can then be quickly modified according to the ideas of the project participants."

### The Result

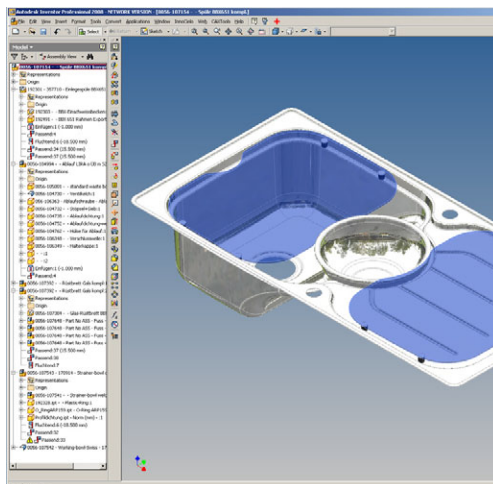
#### Improving Productivity

Thanks to a design process based around digital prototyping, Franke is completing more designs in less time. For example, the stainless steel sink design process now supports the development of a wider variety of products each year. Bomatter explains, "Today, we can realize a lot more projects per year than we used to be able to." He adds, "This allows us to get product ideas to market faster, and our production achieves top quality right from the start."

Sperka explains the overall benefits of Autodesk solutions. "We have chosen the right products from the Autodesk Digital Prototyping product portfolio," he says. "With them, we create 3D CAD models, high-end visualizations and animations, simulation results, and rapid prototyping models. We can also support NC programs for manufacturing, produce parts lists, and provide global data availability. The earliest possible high-end visualizations from Autodesk AliasStudio play an important role in management decision-making, as well as in the subsequent marketing of the products."

#### Learn more

Discover how the Autodesk solution for Digital Prototyping accelerates product development for the consumer products industry. Find out more at [www.autodesk.com/consumer-products](http://www.autodesk.com/consumer-products).



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