

Swift plots further design success as most ambitious release yet is embraced with eyes on EV market

A long-running partnership with a software design provider has allowed Hull's Swift Group to launch its "most ambitious camper vehicle yet," as it gears up to embrace electrification.

Basecamp Six has been brought to an expectant market – booming after lockdown as UK breaks take on a heightened attraction.

The result is a compact crossover camping vehicle that is described as "fun, stylish and ideal for life's adventurers".

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Engineers at the family-run business have been using PTC's Creo design software to introduce several new features, making the most of simulation tools, piping and cabling and advanced assembly to deliver.

It marks a 17-year relationship for the two businesses, with the relationship set to become even stronger. The 'generative design' features offered by the platform are seen as crucial to the firm's desire to make its vehicles lighter in anticipation of a move towards the loss of the combustion engine up front.

Paul Cunningham, engineering director at Swift Group, said: "Our models undergo significant transition and Creo has enabled us to reduce rework in our factory, check design in more detail and take a thorough approach to ergonomics.

“Another big step forward has been the way that people from inside and outside the business can engage with 3D models created in PTC software. Internal users that rely on them include senior decision-makers, members of the sales team and employees from the factory floor responsible for building products.



Inside Basecamp Six.

(Image: PTC)

“External users are typically dealers, who can interrogate Creo Illustrate to identify exactly the part they need to fulfil a customer’s specific requirements and then click through to an ordering system.

“What it all means is that we have been able to deliver our most ambitious camper vehicle yet in the Basecamp Six – on time, to budget and with all the stylish features and benefits.”

The new model features dual fuel combi heating, panoramic windows, plentiful storage, low energy lighting, along with two dinette areas that convert into bunk beds.

Swift Group employs more than 1,000 people at its 100-acre Cottingham headquarters, turning over almost £270 million.

“We’re very excited about Creo’s ability to offer us generative design, where we can generate a certain number of outputs that meet certain constraints and then one of our designers will fine tune to achieve the end result,” added Mr Cunningham.

“One thing we’re talking about all the time is making sure that we get the future marriage between electric vehicles and caravans exactly right, so that the two are compatible for the long-term. And that, for us, is going to involve some serious light-weighting in our design process.

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“If you look at the current capabilities of battery-powered EVs and where they're going in the future, we know we need to shed significant weight from our caravans – in the region of hundreds of kilograms, in some cases.

“And we need to start taking steps towards that now, which is where I see a big role for generative design, in exploring the options available to us to make progress in weight reduction.”

PTC, which has its UK base in Farnborough, is a global company that provides a host of technology solutions to help industrial companies. Swift was introduced by Cambridge-based Root Solutions.

Mike Bird, technical director there, said: “As the software has evolved, so have the ways that our customers put it to work. They constantly find new areas of opportunity for improvement in their design processes that they want to explore, so it’s vital for us that Creo stays well ahead of customer needs and expectations, anticipating them accurately.

“This means that, when clients are ready, the features and functions they require are already there for them: cloud capabilities, generative design, sophisticated simulation tools, sharper rendering and visualisation features, and so on.”

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