



CASE STUDY

# Samtec Accelerates Innovative Product Delivery Using Planview AdaptiveWork



**INDUSTRY:**  
Electrical/Electronic  
Manufacturing

**GEOGRAPHIES:**  
Global

**EMPLOYEES:**  
7,500

**PLANVIEW PRODUCT:**  
 Planview  
AdaptiveWork

**PLANVIEW SOLUTION:**  
Planview Product Portfolio  
Management

## CHALLENGE

With 550 engineers working on 2,000 active projects across eight countries, Samtec needed a more advanced portfolio and work management solution. The organization's clients have complex requests and no room for errors or delays. A continuous flow of new requests and the pandemic's onset hastened the search for software to ensure teams could deliver high-quality products that meet customer demands.

## SOLUTION

Guided by its service culture, Samtec deployed Planview® AdaptiveWork to improve portfolio management, enhance collaboration, and speed time to market. Along with team collaboration capabilities, the organization now has the real-time data and visibility required to guide project initiatives, track key performance indicators, and drive continuous improvements. Using Planview AdaptiveWork has helped Samtec meet customer demands for delivering innovative solutions – including a restoration project for the 50th anniversary of the Apollo space exploration mission.



“If you don’t have visibility into what’s out there, then you can’t really guide people along the route of whether or not they’re working on the right things.”

– TORI FOUST, DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT FOR SAMTEC

## ABOUT SAMTEC

Founded in 1976, Samtec is a privately held \$950 million global manufacturer of a broad line of electronic interconnect solutions from silicon-to-silicon. The company's advanced technology products are used in everything from cutting-edge medical equipment to navigation systems for electric cars. The organization is committed to exceptional service, quality products, and innovative technologies that take the industry further faster.

### CHALLENGE: ELEVATING PORTFOLIO AND WORK MANAGEMENT

Customers rely on Samtec to create unique and challenging applications, often with tight deadlines. Distributed across eight continents, the company's engineering department works on 2,000 active projects throughout the product lifecycle. With the onset of the pandemic, managing the product portfolio became increasingly complex.

"The margin for error for delivering products to our customers is generally very small. Miscommunication and delays have the chance to shut our customers down, in turn ruining our reputation of Sudden Service," said Tori Foust, Director of Product Management for Samtec.

She saw an opportunity to modernize portfolio management, improve cross-team collaboration, and enhance product delivery. The company needed to upgrade its demand management, capacity planning, and resource management abilities.

A centralized solution would provide visibility into the overall portfolio, work, and resources. Ideally, the same solution would enable the engineering teams to collaborate across time zones and projects. For this reason, the solution had to be easy to learn and use.

Foust began to search for software to better manage the portfolio, balance capacity against demand, link plans and resources to execution, and allow for course corrections as needed. The bottom line: Deliver what customers want faster and more efficiently.

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### SOLUTION: PLANVIEW ADAPTIVEWORK FOR CENTRALIZED PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT

Planview® AdaptiveWork met all Foust's requirements for portfolio management software. She led the implementation across Samtec's 550-person engineering

department and is one of four system administrators for the software.

Foust has configured Planview AdaptiveWork to Samtec's specific needs, with the ability to visualize the entire portfolio and how projects are tracking to plan. The team can monitor work and organizational health, spot trends, and make quick, effective decisions.

Samtec's AdaptiveWork dashboard shows each team member's current projects and tasks. In turn, team members receive automatic updates if any change will impact their work, with centralized communications and collaboration features.

Foust also set up demand management within Planview AdaptiveWork. The engineering department now has a full picture of the organization's capacity versus demand. By visualizing each team's availability, the group can better plan and optimize the assignment of resources across projects.

### RESULTS: SAMTEC SUDDEN SERVICE , ACCELERATED

Using Planview AdaptiveWork, Samtec has decreased cycle times, which has enabled the engineering teams to deliver innovative products to market faster. The company now has centralized views into its project portfolio and related work, with the data needed to track project status, automate workflows, and make informed decisions.

This intelligence keeps the global team in sync with current projects as well as new requests. The company can balance the demands on department resources while staying on track with service commitments.

In addition, Planview AdaptiveWork's online collaboration tools have boosted teamwork globally. Everyone can see the latest changes to deliverables or deadlines and plan work more efficiently. According to Foust, the product's ease of use and online training capabilities have enabled the department to grow by 60 percent.

As a result, Samtec has improved on-time delivery by 50 percent and released 75 percent more new products. Here's a look at how they did it.

### IMPROVE THE REQUEST INTAKE PROCESS, DELIVER BETTER OUTPUTS

Samtec has elevated its sales, quoting, and delivery abilities by standardizing and streamlining its intake processes. The engineering department receives several client inquiries per day. Planview AdaptiveWork helps the team manage this continuous flow of requests without overloading resources or falling behind on service commitments.

Using the Planview® AdaptiveWork request module to track opportunities, Samtec has improved its on-time delivery of initial product samples to customers. Once logged into the system, the department assigns a design team and quickly proposes a solution to the client.

“Our simple intake form just takes seconds to log each request,” said Foust. “The active inquiry list with conditional formatting rules brings attention to opportunities that require action regardless of where it is being worked on globally.”

The active inquiry list and overall request process have cut the team’s weekly stand-up meetings by half, a cost savings of more than \$10,000 per year.

In addition, Planview AdaptiveWork reports and dashboards provide insight into request trends, enabling the team to identify the seasonal nature of each ask. Samtec is now balancing engineer workloads more efficiently, confidently redirecting them to other groups when demand is low.

“No matter who is assigned to the project, we can be sure it’s executed with efficiency and quality by how we leverage Planview,” said Foust.

Samtec is fine-tuning its sales strategy as well. Planview AdaptiveWork shows where current opportunities are sitting in the process. The data reveals win percentages and why opportunities fail to pass the quoting stage.

The team also tracks key milestones using Planview AdaptiveWork’s automated workflows. One example is how long it takes to get an initial concept to a customer. This helps drive continuous improvements in customer service.

“Once a customer is ready for us to tool up the new connector, we use a custom action to convert our request and all its information into a templated project,” said Foust. “This guides the engineer through the standard operating procedure for fabricating and qualifying the custom solution. The template helps us ensure we deliver a quality product each time, no matter the tenure of the engineer.”

With this work plan, the team can accurately project when the first samples will be delivered to the customer. Conditional formatting helps quickly highlight any roadblocks to fulfilling its commitments.

This data is also enhancing the quoting process. Foust configured the product to indicate how long it takes to deliver first article samples, combined with an attribute field denoting the complexity of the solution. The dashboard shows average lead times, which then roll back into the quoting process.

### **MOON SHOT: REVIVING A PIECE OF WORLD HISTORY**

Renewed confidence in the quoting process prepared Samtec to tackle a high-stakes restoration project from the Apollo space exploration mission. The opportunity was to reproduce an obsolete connector system that was integral to this mission in time for Apollo’s 50th-anniversary celebration.

The spacecraft and lunar module used in the Apollo missions both required the use of a guidance computer that navigated the Apollo spacecraft to the moon and back, including the landing and ascent of the lunar module to the moon’s surface. Samtec was asked to design, build, and donate replacement connectors used throughout the computer.

This was a challenge because the connectors needed to be replaced were 1960s-era products and no longer available. Fortunately, the team had access to the original prints from 1962. They developed a suitable replacement in time for several anniversary events, where NASA demonstrated landing on the moon with the guidance computer.

“Sharing the contributions from Samtec in front of many pioneers and upcoming innovators in the tech world has bolstered Samtec’s reputation in the industry as a service and innovation leader,” said Foust.

### **FUTURE: ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH PLANVIEW**

Samtec plans to expand its use of Planview products to improve portfolio management and become more effective with its product road map. The company wants to reduce time to market even further by expanding hybrid, agile, and waterfall techniques. Foust and her team are also interested in implementing objectives and key results (OKRs) in Planview AdaptiveWork, as well as increasing data analytics to support better decision-making throughout the organization.

See what Planview solutions can do for your organization. View demos on demand at [Planview.com/demos](https://planview.com/demos).

