



# News Release

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## 3D Systems Boosts Innovation At A. O. Smith With 3D Printers

- Shaves Time-To-Market And Reduces Development Cost,  
Driving Higher Sales -

**ROCK HILL, South Carolina, January 24, 2012** – [3D Systems](#) Corporation (NYSE:DDD) announced today that A. O. Smith Corporation (NYSE:AOS), a leading global manufacturer of water heating equipment, is creating more attractive and energy-efficient water heaters through its advanced new product development process, which integrates 3D printing solutions from the company's full-color professional [3D printers](#).

Using a [ZPrinter](#)<sup>®</sup> to create prototypes in-house, A. O. Smith is shaving weeks off product development, saving substantial cost as well as time. This enables them to iterate more productively and thoroughly refine designs, according to the R&D team.

"Instead of commissioning aluminum molds or sending out to busy contractors for plastic models, we can produce our own high-resolution color prototypes for a fraction of the cost," said A. O. Smith CAD Supervisor, Steve Wood, from the company's Johnson City, TN, manufacturing facility. "When a trial design isn't perfect, we quickly revise it and print another 3D model, or we create several different prototypes at the same time. Our ZPrinter gives us the flexibility to make real-time changes and react quickly to our customers' demands."

An aluminum mold, including setup and prototype production, can be costly, consuming as much as six weeks from the company's design cycle before the first part is produced. Worse, if the prototype doesn't work, a significant design revision can require a new mold and another cycle of waiting. With its [ZPrinter](#)<sup>®</sup> 650 3D

printer, A. O. Smith can print multiple prototypes reflecting a wide range of design alternatives in a few hours at a significant cost reduction.

A. O. Smith expected the ZPrinter to pay for itself quickly, but is happily finding that the return on the ZPrinter investment exceeds even its expectations. "Because we're finding it increasingly valuable as time goes on – and thus are using it more," stated A. O. Smith CAD Operator, Robert Anest, "it is sure to pay for itself sooner than we thought."

In addition to printing prototypes, A. O. Smith is printing molds for the production of plastic molded parts – again avoiding costly aluminum molds. According to Wood, "To produce prototypes from our own molds, we're spending less money and time."

The integration of A. O. Smith's [ZPrinter® 650](#) 3D printer has not just been a cost savings either. "It's both a unique and an effective sales tool," said Wood. "Our customers and partners love them – for one thing, they don't have to lug around a 200-pound water heater. And we're getting great feedback from everyone involved."

### **About 3D Systems Corporation**

3D Systems is a leading provider of 3D content-to-print solutions including 3D printers, print materials and on-demand custom parts services for professionals and consumers alike. The company also provides creative content development, design productivity tools and curation services and downloads. Its expertly integrated solutions replace, displace and complement traditional methods and reduce the time and cost of designing new products by printing real parts directly from digital input. These solutions are used to rapidly design, communicate, prototype and produce functional parts, empowering its customers to create with confidence.

More information on the company is available at [www.3DSystems.com](http://www.3DSystems.com).

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