CASE STUDY

Knovel®

Donaldson

Nurturing innovation in R&D and engineering

SUMMARY

Knovel provides Donaldson's researchers and engineers with information that inspires insights in the lab and leads to innovation.
Donaldson has been a leader in enhancing industry performance ever since the company began making engine air intake filters in 1915. Today Donaldson employs a workforce of 12,800 in over 100 locations and has expanded into such wide-ranging markets as aviation, agriculture, defense, electronics, manufacturing and renewable energy. Donaldson remains a socially responsible corporate citizen committed to maintaining relationships with its customers, protecting the environment and strengthening the communities it serves around the world.

Almost 100 years ago, Donaldson forever changed the farming industry by introducing an air filter for tractor engines that significantly reduced engine failures. Since then, the company has built filtration systems for a diverse spectrum of industries with sales reaching over $1.9 billion.

Boosting R&D and engineering outcomes with information resources
Innovation is a constant theme of Donaldson’s success. Donaldson spends millions of dollars on research and development each year. It’s also why Donaldson formed a partnership with Knovel in 2003.

The primary reason Donaldson came to Knovel was, according to Donaldson’s Library Manager, Julie Eskritt, “the content.”

Eskritt did her homework. “I was thinking of our engineers and our R&D department,” she says. “We’re very diversified… doing research, developing new products, focusing on a problem with a product. And when I saw the kind of resources that were available [through Knovel]...the fact that I could make these resources available to all of our employees worldwide... was something we couldn’t pass up.”

Over the years, Donaldson employees have recognized just how vital Knovel was to their work.

With over 100 operations and brands to support, the diverse staff relied on Knovel for best practice guidance in conducting experiments, advances in material science & adhesives and much more.

Empowering a diverse user community to innovate and solve problems
Eskritt recognized the diversity and standout quality of the Knovel product after having reviewed all the options and today she continues to base her decision on the response she receives from Donaldson’s technical staff. Engineers and researchers consistently cite reliable content, breadth, industry specific relevance and targeted searchability as reasons that they believe Knovel is delivering the best available solution for Donaldson’s engineers. The results also show in their usage patterns:

Brian Parker, a Quality Manager in Donaldson’s Ivyland, Pennsylvania facility, is one of the many voices who chimed in to let Eskritt know how valuable Knovel was to him. “Donaldson needs to get the full subscription to the service,” he wrote. In addition to using Knovel, Parker has...
also recommended it to others as they work to develop new and innovative products for Donaldson.

“There are a lot of times,” says the quality manager, “where we come across a new problem, but there might be some literature or something behind it [at Knovel] that we can use to speed up our time for development and trials... It's nice to have published and peer-reviewed information to look at and the Knovel search function gets rid of a lot of the junk you might get if you're just looking through a complete web search.”

Inspiring creative solutions
The Pennsylvania plant where Parker works manufactures polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) membranes for filtration solutions, so employees need up-to-date information about polymers—something Knovel provides. In a recent product development situation, the quality manager described how Knovel helped him and his colleagues solve a particular problem.

“We were looking at some of our PTFE processing, and I was able to find a polymer handbook [on Knovel] that had some different ideas of what I could do to come up with a lab technique to run some trials and look at some different processes... It was able to give me some fairly creative solutions to try in the lab that were not things we were looking at when we were considering the project.” The resulting solution Parker and his team developed, “allowed [them] to develop an internal test method to check the material, which is something that [they] hadn't been able to do before.”

Parker also likes the “My Knovel” personalization feature because it gives him quick access to the resources and tools he needs the most “without having to lug the whole bookshelf around.” The quality manager goes on to describe the Knovel conversion table as “the first place I go now when I have to do conversions to different units.”

Donaldson is one of the leading filtration companies in the world because they constantly strive to be better. Creative innovation is not just what Donaldson was founded on, it's what put them on top. To stay there Donaldson requires the most current, most reliable information they can get.

That’s why they rely on Knovel.