

Start From Yes

Lessons from a world-first Ameriven project that helped shape Mechdyne's approach to innovation, collaboration, and client value.

Some projects become more than successful implementations. They become reference points: stories teams return to when they need to remember what is possible, why client problems matter, and how much can happen when people are willing to start from yes.

Ameriven was one of those projects for Mechdyne. At the start of the century, a client asked whether real-time drilling information could be transmitted from the drill head by satellite, used to update an earth model, and applied quickly enough to optimize the next well path. It was an ambitious idea, especially for the technology and connectivity environment of the time.

Mechdyne did not begin with all the answers. The team began with a yes, followed by questions, caveats, research, design work, and a commitment to figure it out.

"Start from Yes" did not mean ignoring risk. It meant refusing to let uncertainty end the conversation before the real discovery began.

The Idea That Sounded Far-Fetched

The original concept was simple to say and difficult to execute: capture real-time downhole drilling information, send it by satellite to a remote location, update the earth model, and use that better model to plan the next well path. For Ameriven, working in Venezuela's Hamaca field, the stakes were enormous. Better well placement could mean more productive wells, fewer drilling days, and faster progress toward production goals.

The opportunity also stretched Mechdyne. The company did not enter the conversation as a satellite communications expert or a traditional oilfield services giant. But it did bring visualization, systems integration, problem-solving discipline, and a willingness to connect people, data, and decisions in a new way.



Ameriven needed to bring the data to the experts without requiring every expert to travel to Venezuela.

Bring the Data to the Experts

One of the most important ideas behind the project was that Ameriven did not need to send every expert to Venezuela in order to make expert decisions. Instead, the project helped bring the data to the experts.

Downhole information from the field was transmitted back to Ameriven's center in Puerto La Cruz and, in time, could also reach teams in Houston. This allowed distributed specialists to work from the same visual context, interpret the same earth model, and influence decisions without always being physically present at the rig.

That model feels familiar today. In 2001, it was a preview of the Real-Time Operations Center concept before the industry had widely adopted the name.

The Real Breakthrough Was the Learning Loop

The project was not only about faster communication or impressive visualization. Its deeper value was the learning loop it created.

1. A well was drilled, and MWD/LWD data was gathered from the current path.
2. That information was transmitted to the visualization and interpretation team.
3. The Earth model was updated with new field evidence.
4. The next well path was refined before drilling again from the pad.
5. Each cycle made the model more accurate and the next decision stronger.

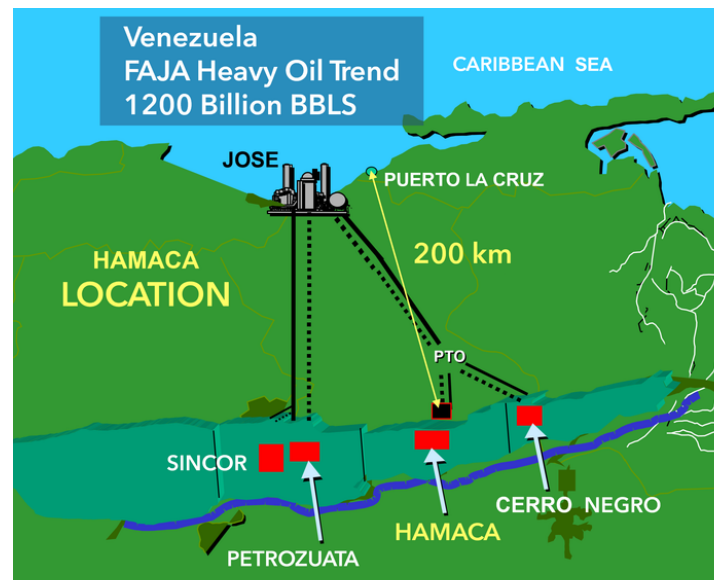
As the model improved, Ameriven could keep wells in productive sand for much more of the well path. Internal recollections from the project report a shift from planning assumptions of roughly 60% or more sand exposure to actual drilling outcomes of more than 95% sand exposure. That difference changed the business case.

Understand the Value of Solving the Client's Problem

The internal Ameriven memory document captures one of the most important business lessons from the project: understand the value of solving the client's problem.

The implementation was approximately \$2 million. Internal recollections estimate that Ameriven saved more than \$70 million in the first year alone, with additional value over the life of the field. The reason was not simply that drilling became faster. It was found that more accurate well paths increased productivity, reduced the number of wells needed, and helped Ameriven reach production goals sooner.

For Mechdyne, the lesson was enduring: the value of a solution is measured by the client's outcome, not by the cost or complexity of the technology alone.



What the Project Taught Us

Lesson	Why It Still Matters
Start from Yes	Ambitious ideas deserve exploration before they are dismissed. The yes opens the door; disciplined questions make the solution real.
Be on Time and Be Prepared	Opportunities can turn on small moments. Showing up matters.
Expect the Unexpected	Complex environments introduce surprise. Confidence, composure, and flexibility become part of the solution.
Use the Team	When field conditions changed or designs needed adjustment, the strength of the broader Mechdyne team kept the project moving.
Communicate Constantly	Distributed work depends on clear communication. Assumptions are expensive; visibility is essential.
Measure Value by the Client Outcome	The project mattered because it helped Ameriven produce sooner, drill fewer wells, and avoid major costs.

A Heritage Story with Modern Relevance

As Mechdyne celebrates 30 years of innovation, the Ameriven project reminds us that the most powerful solutions connect data, provide context, enable collaboration, and drive faster decisions.

While the technology has evolved, the goal remains the same: removing obstacles to insight, understanding, and productivity. Long before it became an industry standard, the Ameriven project demonstrated how connecting people, data, and technology can create meaningful business outcomes—and save valuable time.

More than a technical success, it reflects a mindset that still guides Mechdyne today: start from yes, ask better questions, collaborate effectively, and stay focused on the client's outcome. By helping clients save time through better insight, understanding, and decision-making, Mechdyne continues to turn innovation into measurable results. Explore more Mechdyne heritage stories to see how past innovations continue to shape the future.

Note: Ameriven was a consortium formed by PDVSA, ChevronTexaco, and ConocoPhillips to develop the Hamaca heavy oil project in Venezuela's Orinoco Belt. Following Venezuela's 2007 restructuring of Orinoco Belt joint ventures, the project was reorganized under the Petropiar name, with PDVSA as majority owner and Chevron remaining as a foreign partner.

About Mechdyne: Mechdyne is one of the world's leading providers of innovative visual information technologies. Mechdyne bends technology to our will in ways that transform complex data into insights and ideas. To ensure our customers succeed, Mechdyne provides comprehensive solutions that include consulting, software, technical services, training support, and hardware integration.

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