



EXECUTIVE BRIEF

The future of fashion is digitized, connected, and collaborative

Fashion

The fashion industry is constantly shifting in response to social and environmental factors, as well as supply chain disruptions such as the global health pandemic. That sense of inconsistency is giving rise to a deepening divide between brands, suppliers, and manufacturers. The isolation of each link in the supply chain has already upended many fashion brands, and without digital transformation via collaborative networks, many more stand to lose their position.

But how do you build a collaborative network? Any successful network platform must be established on a technology framework deployed in the cloud, with shared data and processes that allow participants to work seamlessly and in real time. A scalable infrastructure and easy user experience are essential elements toward that goal. In addition to the usual compute, storage, and networking portions, it must also have fashion-specific core capabilities in enterprise resource planning (ERP), product lifecycle management (PLM), and supply chain management (SCM).

It takes more than siloed solutions patched together

In today's fast-moving and increasingly competitive business environment, being "good enough" is simply not good enough. To meet the rigorous demands of supply, demand, financials, inventory management, and the needs of a collaborative network, the ERP solution employed by your company needs the flexibility to meet changing business models, adopt industry best-practice processes, and integrate in real time with other key applications. Just as your people need to be connected in a collaborative network, so do your technology solutions.

A cloud-based, networked ERP solution could be the last upgrade your company will ever need. When you create a collaborative network of people, technology, and processes, you're investing in technology that can be updated in conjunction with other network solutions. This helps you prepare your business for the future while succeeding in the present.

Get ideas to market faster

The fashion business has unique demands, and one of the most critical is the need for a collaborative design and development process. This process must be able to function in an environment of complex global sourcing, whether a company is in high fashion, luxury goods, apparel, footwear, home textiles, accessories, or any other style-based products. What makes this unique—and quite complicated—for fashion companies, is the sheer number of varieties that typically exist within product lines, such as styles, colors, and sizes. This complexity compounds further when additional lines and collections enter the mix.

That's a lot of moving pieces that need to be tracked, managed, and shared. A modern PLM system that consolidates planning, design, development, and sourcing onto a common platform helps ensure that everyone has access to the same accurate information throughout the entire process.

Companies should also be able to share data with suppliers for enhanced collaboration on product specifications and costs. Since suppliers are central to many fashion businesses, a modern PLM system should contain information on ethical sourcing and compliance to meet audit requirements and help protect brand integrity. With all of this in place, fashion companies can share critical information and collaborate in real time throughout all offices and internal departments, as well as across the entire value chain.

Achieving supply chain excellence and network collaboration

Visibility is the foundation of supply chain excellence. With the prevalence of production outsourcing, not only is visibility helpful for automating reporting or correctly estimating product time of arrival, it can also offer eco-conscious consumers visibility into how products are being produced. For companies to run their supply chains optimally, internal and external silos must be removed and replaced with transparency via intelligent information. Using an advanced, cloud-based network can connect all supply chain partners, events, and devices—giving companies end-to-end visibility with actionable insights that are delivered in real time.

This makes it easy to respond to disruptions, seize opportunities, and orchestrate and fulfill demand from anywhere in the supply chain. By achieving supply chain excellence and network collaboration, fashion brands can proactively respond to disruptions, withstand unforeseen events, and pivot directions at velocity—all of which can become true brand differentiators.

A single source of the truth

Truth doesn't come in versions. For fashion brands, integrating your enterprise software is a crucial step toward a single source of truth. By creating a central data repository, you can be sure your employees are all working from the same information—rather than locally stored spreadsheets. With one centralized source of truth, you can trust that information flow between your internal departments and external supply chain partners is happening with accurate, up-to-date, reliable data. By integrating PLM, ERP, and SCM into one source of the truth, you can reduce information silos and offer better information control. To learn more about this topic and gain some practical information on creating a connected and collaborative digitized network, download our [best practice guide](#).

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INF-2377913-en-US-0721-2