



PEARL iZUMi®

PERFORMANCE, PRODUCTS AND PRODUCTIVITY PEARL iZUMI'S PLM JOURNEY



PEARLS OF WISDOM

Pearl Izumi is praised by serious sports enthusiasts for its relentless, fifty-year pursuit of the highest standards of technical performance. From humble beginnings – a post-war Tokyo father creating cycling gear to help his son compete – the brand has fueled what it calls “the human machine” to go farther, faster and longer through a balance of anatomic precision and design as well as a fanatical commitment to innovating with fabrics.

Built from ultra-light microfibers, 4D chamois foam or a variety of other lightweight, technical materials developed for efficient moisture transfer, Pearl Izumi’s product range now includes footwear, apparel and custom products for committed, competitive athletes in cycling, cross-country skiing, triathlon and a slate of other sports.

Today there are Pearl Izumi brand enthusiasts in more markets than ever before and the company itself is now headquartered outside its native Japan - in Colorado, USA – and its supplier base is spread around the world.

BREAKING BARRIERS

Known for helping sportswomen and men surpass their limitations, Pearl Izumi’s close-knit teams have always been quick to acknowledge and address their own constraints. In 2008 the company implemented a first-generation product lifecycle management (PLM) platform to tackle what it then identified as its primary challenges. But as the business evolved and became more and more international, their old platform became restrictive; Pearl Izumi opted to replace it entirely in late 2014.

In an attempt to keep pace with Pearl Izumi’s unique requirements and significant growth, its legacy PLM solution had been heavily customized making upgrades impractical and prohibitively expensive. So in early 2015 the brand revisited the market to seek a next generation solution and to find a proven partner who could match both their customers’ and their own exacting standards.

“The solution we had outgrown was not adaptable to our current requirements as key business needs had changed drastically over 6 years,” says Andrea Schwab, PLM System Support Manager. “And our business continues to change, so the right solution for us today is one that will evolve with us tomorrow.”

“**Centric PLM has changed my entire perspective on what is possible to achieve in PLM without being an IT professional.**”



CLARITY OF COMMUNICATION

Following a detailed process of vendor demonstrations and due diligence, Pearl Izumi selected Centric Software. Five months later, Centric PLM went live and is now in use by 50 people spread across design, development, merchandising, finance and operations teams in the USA, Europe and Asia.

Fittingly for a brand named after an area of Japan known for its crystal waters, the most immediate result of Pearl Izumi’s Centric PLM project was clarity of information. Prior to the implementation, supplier communications, material information and other essential product data resided partly in the company’s legacy PLM platform, but mostly in large, unruly spreadsheets and uncoordinated, unaudited chains of email. With critical communication in a state of chaos, and considerable difficulty locating key correspondence, Pearl Izumi’s design and development teams lacked a single accurate, actionable source of up to date information and had virtually no visibility into previous decisions.

“We lost so much in terms of communication, because our sourcing departments were having to manually extract and save the emails they received from vendors and materials teams,” Schwab explains. “It’s been hugely important to be able to transfer that workflow and place that information into Centric PLM instead. It’s an accessible, actionable way to store our history; we can see costing data from previous styles at any time, for instance, and we no longer have to worry about losing anything.”

Results

- + Rapid implementation: just 5 months
- + Implemented all core modules; integrated to ERP, Adobe Illustrator and demand planning systems
- + All essential product data now in one location
- + Full visibility of prior orders, and full style and component re-use via templates
- + Broad user acceptance
- + Suppliers brought on-board for real time collaboration
- + Time savings in business intelligence and across all creative disciplines
- + Style creation time cut from ½ day to 30 minutes



LINKING THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Key to Pearl Izumi's choice of Centric PLM was its in-built support for multiple product categories. With minimal configuration, the solution was able to accommodate different processes, sourcing models and templates for everything from materials management to technical specifications.

"This was critical for us because Pearl Izumi has footwear and apparel divisions, as well as a custom products department," Schwab says. "We were able to set up templates so that when our teams create a bill of materials specifically for footwear, for example, it pulls in the same information every time. It's a simple tool, but it allows us to build footwear styles more quickly, using the same lasts or the same materials."

Although Pearl Izumi's new PLM journey began with a successful deployment to its apparel department, the brand's footwear staff were soon brought on board. In early 2016 Schwab and her teams extended access to their supplier base. "This was a huge step, training suppliers and bringing them into the system," Schwab says, "because now our development and sourcing teams can really collaborate in a single location, across all of our products and all of our processes." She adds that this additional level of cooperation allowed Pearl Izumi to "involve suppliers in product development more than ever before, allowing them to input key information and status updates without sending emails back and forth."

EXPERIENCE COUNTS

"Our materials team had incredibly high expectations," Schwab says. "But although they were my most difficult group to initially win over, they're now my most innovative team, and Centric was the key to bringing them – and all the other teams that work here – together, by allowing them to really collaborate in a way that made sense to them."

Pearl Izumi also credits Centric's customer-based attitude and approach to innovation with creating a welcoming, user friendly environment, easy for both creative teams and executives alike to pick up. "As the Product Manager for our triathlon apparel, I was not always what you would call a software person," Schwab says, "but Centric PLM has changed my entire perspective on what is possible to achieve in PLM without being an IT professional."

And Schwab and her materials teams are not the only ones made to feel at home by Centric's devotion to the user experience. Through industry-leading integration to Adobe Illustrator – including complete versioning control, direct links to technical specifications, bills of materials, points of measure and other critical data – Pearl Izumi's PLM project has also transformed the way designers work.

"The combination of image management and Adobe integration has been amazing for our design team," says Schwab. "They can live in their world, updating sketches in Illustrator, saving them there, and have the data automatically populate PLM. It's rare for them to even go into Centric PLM itself unless they're looking for a design brief. The experience is fantastic and now we simply couldn't live without it."

FARTHER, FASTER

Pearl Izumi's approach to its PLM implementation was all-encompassing including every core module in the Centric PLM suite: line planning, product management, material management, calendar management, product sourcing, quality management and collection management. Pearl Izumi also prioritized integration between PLM, ERP and demand planning system. They are targeting deployment of Centric's innovative mobile applications in the near future.

The results of the whole-business approach, Schwab says, are evident in whole-business benefits.

"Centric PLM has alleviated so many points of friction between our teams, allowed us to trust one another and to trust the information we're seeing so much more," she says. "Before implementation, we had a regular meeting that everyone at Pearl Izumi dreaded called 'Risks and Opportunities', which involved every team manually updating a spreadsheet with red, amber and green cells to flag up what was off schedule and why. Today, that all lives in Centric, and our meetings are real meetings, not just opportunities to talk about spreadsheets; we're looking at real, actionable insights from PLM, making decisions and innovating new materials free - from the burden of data entry."

The results of Pearl Izumi's implementation are also evident in business intelligence and in the bottom line. "Our materials team used to spend days gaining insights into our fabric inventories, whereas with Centric they can immediately view reports on usage by color, for example, which is a significant time saving," Schwab says.

This is by no means Pearl Izumi's only time saving, though: the brand's biggest success to date has been reducing style creation time from half a day to thirty minutes – a dramatic decrease in an industry besieged by demand and a significant milestone for a company driven to innovate without compromise.

"I like to say that Centric PLM has stopped our users waiting for a computer to do its job," Schwab adds, "but what's even more important is that it's freed them to do theirs."

Challenges

- + Outgrown legacy solution
- + Inconsistent, fragmented product data
- + Little or no visibility into historical orders
- + Dated, desynchronized collaboration with suppliers
- + Creative time stifled by data entry and management
- + Innovation hampered by disconnected technologies



WHAT SOLUTIONS ARE USED BY PEARL IZUMI?

Line planning: Centric's line planning module assures that seasons, departments, collections and even specific styles are managed to meet performance targets.

Material management: With Material management, companies can track materials and usage across product lines, seasons and departments to assure quality, delivery and margins.

Calendar management: Calendar Management helps companies reach their targets more quickly by giving real-time visibility into the status of products and collections, enabling quick management of critical events or bottlenecks.

Product sourcing: Centric's PLM Sourcing module facilitates relationships with suppliers. Global teams can identify and compare suppliers, evaluate the financial scenarios, monitor milestones and receive alerts in case of critical events, at any time and in any place.

Quality management: With Centric's quality management module, companies can establish consistent test standards to streamline quality control and enable safety and compliance tracking.

Collection management: Collection management enables dynamically updated, tailor-made collection books and catalogs that increase sales.

ABOUT PEARL IZUMI

For over 60 years, Pearl Izumi has been evolving and revolutionizing the design and manufacture of performance apparel and footwear for athletes who depend on uncompromising gear. Pearl Izumi products empower runners, riders and triathletes to be faster, more comfortable and to perform better 365 days of the year. In 2014, Pearl Izumi rooted its new world headquarters in the Colorado Front Range where it embraces strong influence, both culturally and structurally, from its Japanese heritage.

ABOUT CENTRIC SOFTWARE

From its headquarters in Silicon Valley and offices in trend capitals around the world, Centric Software builds technologies for the most prestigious names in fashion, retail, footwear, luxury, outdoor and consumer goods. Its flagship product lifecycle management (PLM) platform, Centric 8, delivers enterprise-class merchandise planning, product development, sourcing, business planning, quality and collection management functionality tailored for fast-moving consumer industries. Centric Small Business packages extended PLM including innovative technology and key industry learnings tailored for small businesses.

Centric Software has received multiple industry awards, including the Frost & Sullivan Global Product Differentiation Excellence Award in Retail, Fashion and Apparel PLM. Red Herring named Centric to its Top 100 Global list in 2013 and 2015.



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