CREATING TRANSPARENCY BETWEEN STYLES AND SUPPLIERS:
A SUCCESS STORY FROM MUSTANG GROUP

MUSTANG®
True Denim

Challenges

- Duplicate data entry; using numerous tools/programs throughout product development hampered visibility and decision-making
- Cumbersome communication between company and its agent
- Inability for buyers to easily determine which trims/materials were planned, making negotiation more difficult and costly

Results

- 20% decrease in questions from suppliers after initial tech pack distribution
- Faster sample development, clearer sample feedback, quicker availability of sample pricing information
- Eliminated data entry duplication
- Reduced product information search time by approximately 30%
- Lowered time spent searching for most recent trims by about 40%
- Improved integration with agent Omnibrand, resulting in about 30% time savings
- Cut questions from suppliers after initial tech pack distribution by 30%
- Shortened development by four days with the help of templates, standardized data pools and the integration of Adobe Illustrator

German Jeans Pioneer

MUSTANG Group, headquartered in Germany with suppliers in Asia and North Africa, is a leading jeans brands in Europe. Founded in 1932, MUSTANG launched the first women's jeans and the first corduroy jeans in Europe. Besides the main product, MUSTANG Jeans, the MUSTANG Group is also the licensee for the brands Bogner Jeans and Sansibar Denim.

Ambitious Company Growth Goals

"We are and always have been pioneers—not just in the field of denim, but also with regards to innovation and cutting-edge technology," says Dietmar Axt, CEO of MUSTANG Group. "This characteristic is part of our long-standing, proven company philosophy."

This visionary company was ready to forge new territory with ambitious growth goals. But in order to succeed, MUSTANG knew it needed a better system to support product range expansion, streamline its product development process, increase productivity, and improve collaboration among internal and external teams.

Seeing Double

MUSTANG was using a PDM system in addition to Excel, Adobe, Word and more to track information about its collections, says Dr. Julia Einsiedler, director of operations at MUSTANG Group. The disadvantage of this became particularly evident during meetings in which buying, sales and design staff would review the actual collection to finalize styles and pricing.

"Once decisions were reached, everyone went back to their individual systems to re-enter all the data that was agreed upon in the meeting," says Einsiedler. "We were hampered by redundant data, an unnecessarily high data maintenance workload, and a greater chance of errors."

Materials Madness

Running reports to understand the actual materials in a collection was difficult since most of the needed information was in a file that couldn't easily be accessed by team members, adds Einsiedler. "It was also challenging to analyze the actual development of a style. How many iterations were needed, or which styles were dropped and when that decision was made?"

Trims and materials are extremely important in the jeans industry, but MUSTANG's design community had poor visibility into all of the materials available. Additionally, buyers were often in the dark about which trims and materials were being planned for a collection, making price negotiations more difficult.

Why PLM? Why Centric?

MUSTANG needed the 'single version of the truth' about its products that a PLM solution could provide. Einsiedler was part of the PLM selection group and explains why Centric was selected. "Centric offered an innovative, state-of-the-art solution with a web-based architecture, excellent mobile technology and deep industry expertise among its team."

MUSTANG implemented Centric 8 PLM software for apparel in a fast 15 weeks throughout its women's wear and men's wear product groups. Einsiedler says the implementation with Omnibrand, MUSTANG's sourcing partner, was a relatively seamless—yet extremely beneficial—step, involving two weekend trips to Asia to gather requirements, configure the system, and train the Omnibrand team for roll-out. Also, MUSTANG implemented Centric's patent-pending Collection Book for iPad App, which directly links a collection of styles from the Centric PLM solution to users in sales through an interactive mobile device.

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>
> Julia Einsiedler, MUSTANG JEANS

Supplier Synchronization

With Centric 8, MUSTANG has vastly improved the speed and transparency of its work with Omnibrand and suppliers. Here's how it works.

MUSTANG finalizes style information, assigns the style to Omnibrand and generates a tech pack, all in Centric 8. Omnibrand then accesses the tech pack in Centric 8, assigns a supplier to the style, and sends the tech pack—together with a sample request—to the supplier.

When the supplier sends the sample back, Omnibrand conducts the initial fitting and enters its results—as well as the supplier pricing information—into Centric 8. Omnibrand forwards one sample to MUSTANG, and the company conducts its own fitting then reviews the initial results. All relevant comments about the style are tracked and shared in Centric 8, allowing for an efficient and effective collaboration between MUSTANG and Omnibrand.

"This new way of doing business ensures we have complete transparency with our supplier base, which is very important in terms of compliance and supplier scorecarding," explains Einsiedler. With Centric 8 MUSTANG has eliminated data-entry duplication with Omnibrand in addition to the flood of printed comments that accompanied each sample.

Additionally, MUSTANG is no longer slowed while awaiting pricing data for multiple styles, which would then have to be re-entered into their local system. Omnibrand enters the information directly in Centric 8, bringing more speed and cohesion to MUSTANG's development.

"The ability to achieve greater alignment between the company's product development and buying teams in Germany and our agent in Asia allows us to move forward confidently to meet our growth goals," concludes Einsiedler.

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Pioneers Who Progress with PLM

Today, MUSTANG's product development processes are more streamlined and efficient across the board. One person is responsible for the physical and digital materials database in Centric 8, which is then leveraged by design, technical product development and buying. "Centric 8 enables us to have an overview of all trims and materials in the actual collection at an early stage, which allows our buyers to achieve better pricing from the suppliers," says Einsiedler.

MUSTANG now works directly in Centric 8 during review meetings, entering all relevant data in real-time as the decisions about the collection are made. "It's a great benefit that we do not have to deal with administrative tasks before and after meetings. Instead, we can focus on the real work of MUSTANG, and everyone involved knows instantly what was decided," says Einsiedler.

With Centric 8 MUSTANG is able to effectively analyze and report against all data maintained in the system. The flexible reporting structure of Centric 8 allows MUSTANG to create both standard and ad-hoc reports. Einsiedler notes, "This gives us the insight and transparency into our collection, which is then the basis for informed decision-making that allows us to steer our business to success."

It's not wrong to be true.

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