

Multicategory Retailer Big Lots Streamlines Supplier Collaboration with Centric PLM™



CUSTOMER

Big Lots is a leading North American multicategory retailer with over 1,400 stores, selling products such as home goods, furniture and consumables as well as food items.

STREAMLINING SOURCING AND PRIVATE LABEL DEVELOPMENT

Big Lots sells consumables, electronics/accessories, furniture, hard home goods, seasonal and soft home goods, as well as a range of packaged foods including snacks, beverages and kitchen staples. With 14,000 SKUs to handle, they were looking for a software platform to improve the visibility, clarity, consistency and alignment of processes and data in order to address significant inefficiencies in global sourcing, replacing manual (Excel-based) systems with comprehensive PLM. This would improve collaboration between buyers, merchandising, agents and supplier teams by leveraging a single platform to drive tasks and activities.

To stay competitive, Big Lots also wanted to streamline private label sourcing and development for both food and non-food items by improving supplier collaboration and speeding up the RFQ to product adoption process. By investing in PLM, they aimed to increase margins, automate costing, better manage new product selections and introductions and shorten product development timelines by optimizing key processes throughout the product lifecycle.

WHY CENTRIC?

Big Lots chose to implement Centric PLM due to Centric's retail industry expertise, high level of configurability and user-friendly interface. They were also impressed by Centric's Agile DeploymentSM methodology, best practices and change management abilities in moving to enterprise systems from Excel-based processes.

"The flexibility and best practices embedded in Centric PLM and the project's Agile Deployment methodology enabled us to react quickly and gave us immediate visibility when the US made the decision to impose tariffs on Chinese goods," says Ryan Shuster, Vice President of Global Sourcing at Big Lots.

COLLABORATION DRIVES SPEED TO MARKET

Big Lots began using Centric PLM to manage the assortment planning, sourcing and merchandise planning of non-food lines and has since expanded the solution to include food items. Thanks to Centric's flexibility and configurability, Big Lots now uses it to manage 206 classes of products in 31 departments across all divisions.

On the private label side, Big Lots uses Centric PLM to efficiently manage the merchandise planning and creative and conceptual design process. With active supplier collaboration from the outset, teams use Centric PLM to send out supplier requests en masse, receive product proposals from vendors, compare quotes and convert successful responses into products for development and retail, kicking off the next stages of the product lifecycle such as quality, packaging, artwork and copy. This speeds up the process of quoting, promoting and adopting products for launch to market. Once a product is confirmed, crucial information such as finalized ingredient lists and compliance information becomes available for packaging and legal teams. Changes are updated in real time, giving both internal and external teams an accurate and reliable 'single source of truth' that reduces errors and enhances collaboration.

"We chose Centric PLM to manage assortments, merchandise planning, sourcing and to streamline the supplier RFQ process. We now have centralized product data for hundreds of branded and private-label consumer goods and packaged foods products for better visibility, team and supplier collaboration and faster time to market."

Ryan Shuster, Vice President of Global Sourcing at Big Lots

CUSTOMER

Big Lots is a major North American multcategory retailer, selling both food and non-food lines.

CHALLENGES

- Efficiently managing assortments with over 14,000 SKUs
- Improving internal and external team communication
- Enhancing supplier collaboration to improve the 'quote and promote' process
- Streamlining private label product development and packaging with full supplier collaboration
- Expanding PLM workflows to cover food as well as non-food items

PROJECT

Big Lots uses Centric PLM to manage the product lifecycles of both food and non-food products. Centric PLM streamlines and coordinates the process of supplier requests, quote comparisons and selection of products for retail, and has improved the efficiency of private label product development and packaging with greater supplier collaboration.

BENEFITS REALIZED

- **Flexible solution easily adapted** to handle products across all divisions, including food & beverage products
- **More efficient** supplier requests, quote comparison and product adoption process
- Real-time 'single source of truth' data **improves speed and accuracy**
- **Supplier collaboration** on private label products from the outset of the creative/inspiration process
- Packaging and legal teams can immediately **access up-to-date ingredient lists** and compliance information from suppliers



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