5 ways to fast-track the design to sales process

In today's constantly changing global market, you're under enormous pressure to create innovative fashion products at a moment's notice. Industry leaders can go from design to the sales floor in 15 days, **reports Forbes**, while the industry standard is **6 months**. By bringing all of your teams together with real-time information, product lifecycle management (PLM) functionality can help you get your products to market faster.

Here are 5 ways you can use a PLM system to fast-track your business:

1

Consolidate planning, design, and development

Whether you're in high fashion, luxury goods, apparel, footwear, home textiles, accessories, or other style-based products, the fashion business has unique demands. Constantly changing trends, the concepts of collections, lines, seasons, styles, colors, and sizes combined with importance of the look and feel of fabrics, and global sourcing create a more complex and collaborative design and development process. By consolidating planning, design, development, and sourcing on a common platform, the right PLM system can streamline your operations so you can meet these challenges—from initial concept right through to engaging the consumer.

2

Fine-tune your collection as you go

When you can release multiple collections throughout the year. For a company like Zara, not only does creating multiple collections inspire customers to move quickly to pick up a style before it's gone, but it also helps save on manufacturing and warehousing costs, **notes the Knowledge@Wharton blog**. For you to create an agile and responsive fashion business, it's important that line planning and product development can progress in parallel. Rather than the traditional rigid sequential model that requires one function to be completed before another starts, the right PLM system should allow you to add new styles—or connect existing ones—to a plan whenever you choose. As well as being able to start the design and development process sooner, parallel planning and development makes it easy to respond to events and fine-tune your collection and styles as you go and release new collections faster without disrupting your momentum.

3

Easily access libraries and templates

Because product innovation is a key aspect of fashion, the PLM system you choose should give your designers the freedom to work the way they want, while connecting them with the data the merchandisers and technical designers define. Your choice in a PLM solution should offer you easy access to visual libraries, centrally stored design elements, and pre-configured templates. The ability to mass create, update, and replace items can reduce the number of mouse clicks it takes to implement changes, freeing up time for creative thinking.

4

Collaborate in real-time across your value chain

A fashion-specific PLM system can enhance your visibility by providing a central repository for all your product design and development information, allowing you to share real-time information across all your offices and internal departments as well as across your value chain. H&M, for example, has connected each of its stores with its corporate logistics and procurement systems and central warehouse, **observes Forbes**. That way, H&M's executives get real-time visibility into all of the company's processes. When all of your teams access the same data, your organization can save time and avoid the costly errors introduced through manual data entry. You'll have the complete picture—from the company level right down to critical path tracking of individual styles and colors. The PLM system you choose should also offer the option to share data with suppliers for enhanced collaboration on product specifications and costs. With suppliers being central to many fashion businesses, your PLM system should contain information on ethical sourcing and compliance to meet audit requirements and help protect brand integrity.

5

Use analytics to turn your data into insights

Your PLM solution should reduce your total cost of ownership by including analytics and reporting tools to help you turn your data into insights. You can track, collect, and analyze the data generated between your design teams, among product developers and sourcing managers, suppliers and buyers. By using your PLM system to quickly and accurately measure and analyze key performance metrics, you'll be able to fine tune processes in the product lifecycle. It is especially useful if your software includes a built-in report generator and convenient, pre-configured templates, as well as the tools to generate bespoke reports.

When you're properly analyzing the data your business generates and using that information to improve visibility throughout your teams, you'll be able to produce a better product—and get it into the hands of the consumer faster.

**Learn more about
Infor Fashion PLM ›**

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