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MEETING STRATEGIC GOALS AND KEEPING UP TEAM SPIRIT: A PLM SUCCESS STORY BY CENTRIC SOFTWARE AND TAPE À L'ŒIL

TAO

TAPE À L'OEIL

FASHION, FROM NAUGHT TO FOURTEEN

Based in Wasquehal, Northern France, Tape à l'Œil (TAO) creates bold, colorful children's fashions for birth to age 14. With a complete range of clothing, accessories and footwear, TAO sells 25 million products per year through a global network of more than 330 retail outlets in 20 countries, as well as through its own online channel.

"The Tape à l'Œil style is unique, mixing concepts from men's and women's catwalk shows to create children's collections that are fashionable, colorful and accessible to everyone," says Cécile Noyer, TAO's Group Product Manager. "Our goal is to provide the best possible value for money in the childrenswear market," she adds.

ACCELERATING PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

With a brand built on satisfying customer demand, Tape à l'Œil sought to further improve its speed to market by implementing a Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) solution.

"Before PLM, we relied on Excel and email to share product information between our teams in Asia and France, and problems often arose with errors and multiple versions of the same data," says Olivier Paul, Head of Tape à l'Œil's Purchasing Group. "We needed a new, collaborative tool to support our ambition to further increase our style count."

TAO's decision to select Centric Software as their PLM supplier was driven by its fashion industry expertise, as well the intuitive, iterative approach to implementation allowed by its Agile Deployment^{SM} methodology.

"We chose Centric as a collaborative project team - with representatives from each area of the business - not through an executive committee or as an IT-only initiative," Paul explains. "The flexibility of the solution means that we were able to configure it to perfectly match all of our processes and ways of working. And with the support of Centric Software's expert consultants and their Agile methodology, we could test, learn and improve through iteration – which is an approach we believe in completely."

> **" The best part of this project is that we went live in just six months, with every product category simultaneously: boys, baby boys, girls, baby girls and accessories. "**

Challenges

+ A collaborative tool was needed to support an increase in style count

+ Creation of a comprehensive, global view of collections

+ Improvements to data structure and sharing

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A DEFINITE DIFFERENCE IN THE DAY-TO-DAY

A year after going live, TAO now manages around 3,500 styles in PLM. "With Centric PLM, our data is now much more reliable since each product is automatically associated with its retail price, store format and category," says Cécile Noyer.

With Centric PLM, TAO has also significantly improved the structure of its product data and the way the company communicates its technical specifications to suppliers. "Feedback from our supply chain partners has been extremely positive and we have gained a lot of ground in efficiency and productivity in this area," explains Olivier Paul, who also points to striking improvements in TAO's processes for managing materials. "Materials are the most essential part of any product and being able to enter all our technical fabrics into a single PLM library allows us to easily see how many products are using a given material."

Tape à l'Œil is also using Centric PLM for more traditional management tasks. "Centric PLM makes it much easier for us to manage our teams," says Paul, "so when an individual has a heavy workload or a team member is absent, we can easily access their data and share it with colleagues to improve collaboration."

"Centric PLM has provided much-needed structure to our processes," adds Cécile Noyer. "It's an intuitive, practical tool that has helped to dramatically reduce human error and bring harmony to our ways of working."

TRANSFORMING THROUGH TEAMWORK

"The success of our PLM project was due to a combination of factors," summarizes Olivier Paul. "The strength of the solution itself, the composition of our project team, which included end users, and the support we were given by Centric's consultants and our own technical teams."

Cécile Noyer agrees, "The entire implementation was made much easier because Centric understood our business and because rapid on-boarding of employees and upstream partners allowed us to deploy the solution quickly throughout the supply chain."

In total, Tape à l'Œil spent just six months implementing Centric PLM across its entire product range and for all its domestic and international teams.

"An important part of the implementation that often gets overlooked is how easily Centric's consultants were able to build a relationship with the TAO teams," adds Noyer. "They were so attentive to our requests and understood our challenges so well that we really felt as though they had become part of our team. Without that support and the structure provided by the solution itself, I believe we would be struggling today to adapt to what has become a very volatile market."

"The best part of this project is that we went live in just six months, with every product category simultaneously: boys, baby boys, girls, baby girls and accessories," says Olivier Paul, smiling. "We delivered on time, on budget and every product is now managed in PLM. This is a huge success, and something we are all extremely proud of."

Results

+ 3,500 products, across all categories, now managed in PLM

+ Improved data integrity, with automatic associations between products, prices, store formats and categories

+ Seamless information sharing between French and international offices

+ Complete implementation within six months, on time and within budget

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ABOUT TAPE À L'ŒIL

Tape à l'Œil is all about customer satisfaction, style and omni-channel commerce that spans the world. For more than 20 years, we have created collections for children aged 0 to 14 years that combine color, fashion, price and quality.

The TAO shopping experience stands out through a sparkling, personalized welcome and our ability to offer the widest choice – with regular refreshes to our collections – at 330 stores in 20 countries, as well as through our own website.

TAO employs more than 1,000 people, all driven by a strong corporate culture.

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 SMB 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 in 2016 and Frost & Sullivan's Global Retail, Fashion, and Apparel PLM Product Differentiation Excellence Award in 2012. Red Herring named Centric to its Top 100 Global list in 2013, 2015, and 2016.

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