marine layer

FINDING THE BEST PLM FIT
MARINE LAYER SAVES TIME AND IMPROVES DATA MANAGEMENT WITH CENTRIC SMB

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A 'SEVEN-DAY WEEKEND' LIFESTYLE BRAND

Marine Layer was founded in 2009 by two friends, Mike Natenshon and Adam Lynch. The San Francisco-based company began by making just one product: a super-soft shirt, made from a recycled beechwood fiber and cotton mix. This unique fiber is used to create clothing that is 'absurdly soft' and comfortable, designed for a casual, 'seven-day weekend' lifestyle.

Marine Layer now produces a large range of clothing and accessories for men, women and children, from button-down shirts to bathing suits. MicroModal, the beechwood fiber mix used in over 25 custom fabrics developed by Marine Layer, is eco-friendly and sustainable. The company mainly uses production facilities in San Francisco and Los Angeles, keeping supply chains short and local. More technical styles are handled by overseas manufacturers that adhere to strict ethical and sustainable standards.

Marine Layer has grown at a rapid rate, and now has 35 retail stores across most major cities in the USA as well as a thriving online business.

SUPPORT FOR A SCALING BUSINESS

To support Marine Layer's expansion, the company decided to invest in a PLM solution to manage data and support operations from product design and development to retail.

"Before we selected a PLM solution, we had information stored in a lot of different places," explains Megan Eddings, Director of Design & Product Development at Marine Layer. "We had tech packs and BOMs in Excel sheets and information scattered across various documents and emails. People would waste time looking for information and get confused about what was confirmed. We had printed line sheets with handwritten notes that were a 'bible' of up-to-date data, but obviously these were not widely and immediately accessible so it wasn't an ideal solution."

"We needed a place to store all of our shared information that people could access quickly and easily," she continues. "We wanted everybody to be on the same page and have a history of products from past seasons. So, we started looking for a PLM solution."

FRICTIONLESS ADOPTION

Marine Layer organized several demos from leading PLM vendors, and ultimately selected Centric Software's SMB solution, a flexible, cloud-based system designed specifically for growing small to medium enterprises.

"We did a bunch of demos, but we felt that Centric was the best fit," says Eddings. "The possibility of viewing data from different angles was our favorite thing from the beginning, and still is today. You can give each team customized views, depending on their specific needs, and not waste time searching through heaps of other data."

"The ability to configure the system ourselves is great," Eddings continues. "We're on SMB for smaller businesses, and the system is set up to scale with us. We've been able to easily add extra attributes and workarounds to suit our particular way of working."

Marine Layer took just two months to implement Centric SMB, and went live on the system in November 2016.

As Eddings says, "It's super user-friendly, and now that our everyone knows how it works, we can onboard new users quickly. It can be as complex or as simple as you need it to be. Once we got up and running on the system, adoption went smoothly."

> **" CENTRIC SMB HAS CHANGED THE WAY WE OPERATE. IT'S LIKE HAVING A WHOLE OTHER PERSON ON EACH TEAM, EVERY SINGLE DAY. IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT CENTRIC NOW. "**

CHALLENGES

+ Data scattered across different documents and formats

+ Teams wasted time searching for up-to-date information

+ Number of stores and product style growing rapidly

+ Needed a complete history of products from past seasons

+ Depending on printed sheets for most up-to-date data

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MORE TIME TO CREATE NEW STYLES

Marine Layer has experienced substantial time savings since implementing Centric SMB, and anticipates that the wealth of data building up from previous seasons will help to further increase efficiency in the future.

"Having Centric in place saves everyone about 10-15 percent of their time on a day to day basis, mainly because people don't have to spend time searching for the right answers, asking questions and re-confirming whether information is up to date," explains Eddings. "Obviously it still takes time to put together tech packs and gather comments, to take just one example, but Centric has helped us to manage data and make that work more efficient and effective."

"Now that we're building up a database of previous seasons, it's easier to just press go on repeats, or access templates that can be adapted for new items," she continues. "The first season we put onto Centric had 178 styles, and now, a year and a half later, we have 488 styles. Our product range is expanding at a very fast pace, and that wouldn't be possible without the data management functions of Centric SMB. We can now easily repeat tried and true styles so we can spend time and energy focusing on new and original products."

Centric SMB has also made it easier for Marine Layer to assess the performance of vendors and pinpoint prototype errors, which contributes to better efficiency in product development and manufacturing.

RESULTS

+ 10-15% time savings for all teams

+ 174% increase in the number of styles in a year and half

+ Vendor reporting function makes it easier to assess vendor performance

+ Enhanced ability to pinpoint prototyping errors

+ View functions make it possible for teams to access most relevant information

+ Able to efficiently store and manage historical and current product data

"Since we started using Centric, the vendor reporting capabilities have helped us to assess the performance of our suppliers," notes Eddings. "We can gauge the efficiency of individual vendors and whether they consistently deliver on time, which helps us to structure our business in a way that collaborates more effectively with vendors."

"Now that we keep records about prototypes in one accessible digital location, we can track prototype iterations and pinpoint any resulting errors more quickly. Centric helps to maintain that information so we can react with speed."

FLEXIBLE FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

Centric SMB is designed to scale as Marine Layer continues to grow, and the soft fabric pioneers see Centric's PLM solution as an important foundation for managing historical and current data.

"We expect that Centric will continue to support our workload and data management needs as we grow," says Eddings. "The bigger we are, the more important it is to have a history of what we've made."

She concludes, "Centric SMB has changed the way we operate. It's like having a whole other person on each team, every single day. It's hard to imagine life without Centric now."

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ABOUT MARINE LAYER

Marine Layer locally designs and manufactures its own line of casual apparel. We sell through our website and our retail stores throughout the US of A. We are a fast-growing company whose success has been built on a small, passionate team that works hard and has a lot of fun.

ABOUT CENTRIC SOFTWARE

From its headquarters in Silicon Valley and offices in trend capitals around the world, Centric Software provides a Digital Transformation Platform for the most prestigious names in fashion, retail, footwear, luxury, outdoor and consumer goods. Centric Visual Innovation Platform (VIP) is a visual, fully digital collection of boards for touch-based devices like iPad, iPhone and large-scale, touch-screen televisions. Centric VIP transforms decision making and automates execution to truly collapse time to market and distance to trend. Centric's 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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