

FASHION BRAND LEVERAGES CENTRIC VISUAL BOARDS TO STREAMLINE COLLABORATION FOR PLANNING, DESIGN AND MERCHANDISING

WHO

Founded over 70 years ago, this leading men's and women's apparel brand can be found today in more than 4,000 stores worldwide and operates across 70 markets.

CENTRIC VISUAL BOARDS ENHANCES DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The Global IT Director at this long-standing fashion retailer describes the design process prior to implementing the Centric Visual Assortment Board. "We've always had these big whiteboards where we would pin the collection and go through it, take some notes, but then somebody needed to take those notes and enter them in PLM." This manual process was not only time-consuming and prone to error as notes would often get lost in the transfer from the whiteboards to PLM; but it was a waste of time, having to go through everything twice; once to decide and then a second time only to transcribe.

They sought a smoother and more efficient approach to visualizing their collections and transitioning from planning and design to product development. The retailer required a solution that would enable the storing of notes and feedback for faster decision making and provide their designers with an easy-to-use, intuitive, and functional workspace that they so desperately needed.



THE VISION OF CAPTURING OUR INITIAL CONCEPTS DIGITALLY AND SEAMLESSLY WORKING FROM THAT INITIAL CONCEPT IMMEDIATELY WITHIN PLM WAS THE 'WOW' FACTOR. THAT IS WHAT MADE US INVEST IN CENTRIC VISUAL BOARDS.



ONE SINGLE VISUAL WORKSPACE FOR DESIGNERS

For the design team, physically wading through the paper-based whiteboards and pinning notes with comments and feedback simply wasn't working and was a major source of frustration for staff. Finding themselves in the midst of the Great Resignation, our brand was looking to keep their teams happy, engaged and fulfilled so reducing their pain points and day-to-day hindrances was a top priority. They needed a cohesive story that was reference-able across the entire organization. "We talk so much about one version of the truth [here], and Centric Visual Boards™ allows us to capture both the inspiration and the figures and put it in one place so that we can always refer back to it."

Centric Visual Boards is an open platform and provides teams with the flexibility to use it as either a standalone product; integrate with Centric PLM or even with an alternative PLM also, to connect to various other business systems such as ERP, PIM and more. By implementing Centric Visual Boards, this long-standing retailer is now digitally capturing 100% of changes to products, which has reduced the tedious work that design teams were once plagued with, allowing for greater focus on creativity and innovation. No more lost sticky notes, no more manual entry, no more disparate systems and no more spreadsheets. Just one digital home for the design and development teams to effectively collaborate using the most up to date information that is conveniently at their fingertips.

VISUAL DATA FOR IMPROVED DECISION MAKING

The brand celebrated its first major milestone with Centric Visual Boards when they used it to complete their Visual Range Plan, an important component of their critical path. They incorporated visual data to better envision the collection and monitor how it was progressing. "Centric Visual Boards gives us the ability to bring imagery either from our own campaigns or inspiration into a business brief and clearly visualize how a collection could potentially look. Everything is supported with real live samples such as bot samples, reference samples, archive samples, previous season samples or material cuttings." describes the Product Manager.

Not only did this new way of working provide a more visual overview of the collection, but it also allowed the design, development, collection, and planning teams to quickly compare data points, refer back to previous ideas in subsequent meetings and ultimately make faster and more informed decisions.

SAVING TIME, MONEY AND THE PLANET

Leveraging Centric Visual Boards has resulted in several tangible and intangible benefits for the brand. The brand explains how Centric Visual Boards has significantly decreased the time required to complete their ranking meetings, "A meeting that would have taken two days to get through for men's wear and women's wear, and then probably another half day to do kids and teens; took us maybe two or three hours to do. And that was our first time doing it with Centric Visual Boards, so I think we'll get it even better."

The reduced administrative burden has also been welcomed by the team. This has not only saved time to market but has also reduced frustration for employees as they now have more time to focus on other collections, fine-tune allocations and make better decisions about suppliers. This has also given the teams time back to work on other projects and focus their attention on innovation. The IT Project Manager at the brand explains how teams can do more in their day thanks to the relief that Centric Visual Boards has provided, "There are some things you just wouldn't do. You wouldn't have done it because it would have taken too long."

A user explains some of the other measurable time and cost savings that the company has experienced by undergoing a digital transformation. “We quantified the cost of paper and the pins and the board – that’s a true cost.” They estimated that printing costs have been reduced by approximately 50% and they have renegotiated a new contract with their printing company. But the cost of physical materials isn’t the only benefit for the brand. “It’s also the time we’re saving. Pinning up a bunch of papers on a board, designers having to print them out, fold them, pin them up on a board, those are all cost savings. And there’s also the environmental impact. It was a huge amount of paper that we were wasting, which is also a big plus for us,” continues our client.

IMPROVED TRANSPARENCY & COLLABORATION

Centric Visual Boards has increased transparency and cross-collaboration between the brand’s Planning, Merchandising and Market Managers. Shared insights into how specific collections will look earlier into the planning process has resulted in better decision making and reduced costs. Market insights are made earlier so they can segment and adjust the collection from design, development, and production at a much earlier stage thanks to the visualization of Centric Visual Boards. Every collection can now be designed with intention and purpose, gone are the days of finger crossing when going to market.

Furthermore, the convenience of a digital process allows for remote collaboration between teams. “You can work remotely, not because of COVID, but in any situation you can work from anywhere and you’re not tied to the office, which allows for collaboration and makes us a more attractive employer,” the manager explains. The ability to collaborate with teams remotely has proven to be beneficial for both the company and its employees.

The product manager explains, “In the past, we would design a collection with the intention of how we’d go to market and just cross our fingers. Now, we’re able to get the market insights into the collection at a much earlier stage so we can adjust within the design and development phase. Centric Visual Boards provides us with better analysis, better ways of adjusting the collection, and the right timing so we can incorporate market insights earlier in the process.”

BUSINESS CASE HIGHLIGHTS

CUSTOMER: GLOBAL FASHION BRAND AND RETAILER

Long-standing fashion retailer operating in 70+ markets and sold at more than 4,000 retail stores worldwide.

CHALLENGES

- Managing disparate systems was frustrating, labor intensive and costly to the business.
- Errors and loss of data when transcribing white boards into PLM.
- Manual whiteboards were not a functional workspace for designers.
- Chaotic collection review resulted in wasted time and uninformed decisions- also costly to the business.
- Sticky notes all over the place making it difficult to understand decisions and approvals.
- The Great Resignation

BENEFITS REALIZED:

- Ability to visually analyze and compare for improved insight and better decision making.
- Optimized ability to review first prototypes to improve design decisions.
- Centralized and streamlined feedback process, which reduced wasted time and stress on the teams.
- Provide an easy to use, visual workspace for designers and the ability to share with the rest of the business in a transparent way.
- No more sticky notes saving time on data entry and eliminating the risk of lost data.

PROJECT

The company implemented Centric Visual Boards to transform their delivery journey from planning and design to execution.

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