

# ARITZIA

ARITZIA & THEIR PLM SUCCESS



A FASHION COMPANY FINDS THEIR PRODUCT  
LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT SOLUTION MATCH

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"We used a lot of Excel, managing all of our product development data in a world of multiple spreadsheets. We just couldn't continue to operate that way and scale our business efficiently."

Tim Smith, Director of Product Technology, describes the situation at Aritzia before Centric PLM™. The company has risen steadily since their inception, increasing in pace in recent years. Using spreadsheets and email for product development amid their accelerated growth wasn't very effective or reliable. Today, Aritzia has all their product information in one place, their workflows have been captured and automated and communication is improved among the team members. What brought about these results?

## GROWING WITH ARITZIA

Vanessa Goluboff, Director of Product Integration describes the company. "We started 37 years ago in Canada, expanding into the US within the last 15 years. What began as a standalone boutique that sold elevated apparel and accessory brands, has really evolved into a vertically-integrated design house. That means that we develop a portfolio of brands that go from design to manufacturing, selling direct to customers in our stores." Women can grow up with Aritzia, addressing both their casual fashion and professional needs through apparel and accessories. "We have the concept of offering everyday luxury to our customers through engaging service, beautiful products and aspirational shopping experiences through our carefully curated stores. We feel like all of this combined is our competitive advantage and really helps to drive customer loyalty."

Multipronged marketing communication takes place via various marketing channels such as social media, email etc. "We feel like all of this combined is our competitive advantage and really helps to drive customer loyalty."

## A SOLID FOUNDATION

One of Aritzia's goals was to shore up their product data to ensure that it had integrity before they started to plan off of it. They also wanted to empower their designers to spend more time on the products and less time on administrative work. Goluboff says, "We prefer to be meticulous and develop world-class infrastructure as we go, focusing on quality. We actually took three years to deliver PLM. One year to research and understand the PLM landscape of key players and the service offering, while running in parallel, a complete documentation of our business. Doing these exercises really helped us to nail our scope and our phase-in strategy."

Aritzia went at the selection methodically and thoroughly, gathering information from different sources and cross-referencing them. They also used a stage gate process, mapping out their requirements and reviewing all their existing tools. They built a solid foundation of understanding that they continue to reference today. Once they had Centric in their sights, it was on to an extensive vendor demo selection process. "It meant going through every single detail to understand where we have a gap and where we would have to infill with strategy or potentially change." Wanting to cover all their bases, Aritzia sought out unbiased opinions. "Where we really learned a lot was talking to [Centric] customers." Ultimately, Aritzia opted for Centric PLM.



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## CHALLENGES

- + Large dynamically changing assortments
- + Different business models
- + Manual aggregation of multiple spreadsheets
- + Highly manual sample tracking

## SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE

Aritzia continued their calculated pace for implementation, taking a year to design, build and test the system. "That meant from one to three years we had the same people for the purpose of continuity," says Goluboff. Then COVID hit, right when they were supposed to go live. Taking a step back allowed them to devote more effort toward change management, providing specific training for each department working with their subject-matter experts. Says Goluboff, "By involving our subject-matter experts, they were so bought into the system at the time of go live, we were really able to deploy with little resistance."

Goluboff says, "We've just been so impressed with how good Centric comes as a configurable system, how well it matches our business." But in the spirit of continuous improvement, Aritzia has made 300+ enhancements since go live. Smith remarks, "Enhancements have a less quantifiable ROI, but still deliver incremental value. What you want to minimize is any administrative work like fixing bugs..." He follows that up with, "We aren't spending any of our time in that lowest-value bucket of fixing bugs." The refinements came about through user requests, proving to the users that they are being heard, and building trust. Says Smith, "That configurable nature is just so critical to how we've been able to roll out, manage and deliver on our [internal] customers' expectations, and really drive adoption."

## THE CENTRIC PLM BOOST

PLM has left its mark on so many areas of the company: overall efficiency, getting closer to the customer, sustainability, and not to be overlooked, employee satisfaction.

Smith says, "PLM became that classic single source of the truth, so that we could have a really high quality, highly trusted source of information about all the products that we're bringing to market. And then our next phase will be to integrate that data with our planning tools so that we're able to understand those opportunities and plan purchases accordingly."

Being vertically integrated allows a unique closeness to Aritzia's customer with strong feedback on the styles from their retail staff, based on what they are seeing in the stores with customers. If there is a widely experienced issue, Aritzia can course correct. "We're really committed to quality and that means evolving and innovating and changing products to better meet needs," says Goluboff. "On aritzia.com, you can see that we have such a wide assortment because we're trying to find something unique for you." But larger assortments are obviously more challenging to develop, making PLM essential to aid in that effort.

## TECHNOLOGY MAKES WORK BETTER

Goluboff says, "One of our focuses has been identifying what our product technology roadmap looks like, ensuring that we have start and finish dates of these projects, ensuring that we build the team and the bench strength to deliver." She mentions the inevitable future initiatives around PLM and other technologies and the importance of retaining her team members to lead them. "Without this technology, it becomes inefficient, not as exciting to do your job. And I think that when you're able to break new ground, take on new products, improve margin... this is all highly rewarding for you as an individual coming to work every day." It is worth mentioning, that despite the hit that retail businesses took during pandemic closures, Aritzia did not lay off a single retail employee. Such is their commitment to their business, their customers and their people.

## RESULTS

- + Larger assortments managed
- + Designers spending more time designing
- + Spreadsheets eliminated
- + Happy, empowered workers





## ABOUT ARITZIA ([www.aritzia.com](http://www.aritzia.com))

Aritzia is an innovative design house and fashion boutique. We're about individual style. We're obsessed with quality. And we think shopping should be fun. The Hill family started Aritzia inside their 70-year-old department store in Vancouver. When Brian Hill opened the first standalone boutique in 1984, the idea was simple: offer beautiful clothes in aspirational spaces with exceptional service. Women seemed to like what we were doing, so we grew. And we've kept on growing ever since.

We develop our own brands, treating each as an independent label with its own creative team and aesthetic. As a group, they have a few things in common: an effortless appeal, a focus on fit and an of-the-moment point of view. We sweat the small stuff. It's why we search out the best mills and factories around the world. It's why we consider (and reconsider) every last seam, pleat and button. It's why our clothes look and feel so good. We round out our selection with pieces from brands we love – ones who obsess about craftsmanship and design as much as we do.

## ABOUT CENTRIC SOFTWARE ([www.centricsoftware.com](http://www.centricsoftware.com))

From its headquarters in Silicon Valley, Centric Software® provides a Product Concept to Consumer Digital Transformation Platform for fashion, retail, footwear, luxury, outdoor, consumer electronics and consumer goods including cosmetics and personal care and food and beverage. Centric's flagship Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) platform, Centric PLM™, delivers enterprise-class merchandise planning, product development, sourcing, quality and product portfolio optimization innovations specifically for fast-moving consumer industries. Centric Visual Innovation Platform (CVIP) offers highly visual digital board experiences for collaboration and decision-making. Centric Retail Planning is an innovative, cloud-native solution powered by Armonica Retail S.R.L., that delivers an end-to-end retail planning process designed to maximize retail business performance. Centric Software pioneered mobility, introducing the first mobile apps for PLM, and is widely known for connectivity to dozens of other enterprise systems including ERP, DAM, PIM, e-com, planning and more as well as creative tools such as Adobe® Illustrator and a host of 3D CAD connectors. Centric's innovations are 100% market-driven with the highest user adoption rate and fastest time to value in the industry. All Centric innovations shorten time to market, boost product innovation and reduce costs.

Centric Software is majority-owned by Dassault Systèmes (Euronext Paris: #13065, DSY.PA), the world leader in 3D design software, 3D digital mock-up and PLM solutions.

Centric Software has received multiple industry awards and recognition, including being named by Red Herring to its Top 100 Global list in 2013, 2015 and 2016. Centric also received various excellence awards from Frost & Sullivan in 2012, 2016, 2018 and 2021.



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