



ARDEN COMPANIES ADVANCE THEIR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH CENTRIC PLM™

LEADING OUTDOOR CUSHION AND FABRIC COMPANY GETS
AHEAD OF MARKET CONDITIONS WITH TECHNOLOGY



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“We’ve transitioned as a company from literal pen and paper as our medium of product information storage, to a globally used digital solution.”

VP of e-Commerce at Arden Companies Alex Thomson describes how far they have come. Partners with Centric for over a decade, Thomson talks about the changes over that time. “When I joined the company, we had a legacy ERP system, but all of that infrastructure and the processes surrounding it have really modernized in that time, actually starting with Centric PLM leading the charge of that modernization.”

EVOLUTION OVER HALF A CENTURY IN BUSINESS

Kyle Sharpe, VP of Global Procurement at Arden Companies, gives some background on the business. “Arden was founded in 1964 and privately held until 2019, when we were acquired and joined the Central Garden & Pet family of companies. Arden is a leading outdoor cushion and pillow provider here in the US, Canada and Mexico. Lowe’s, Home Depot, Walmart are a few of our key customers, and we also have a very robust e-commerce business. We produce both retailer private label brands and also our own national brands.” Arden has 12 facilities across the globe with four manufacturing sites in the U.S.

THREE CHALLENGES TO SCALABILITY

According to Arden, core to driving productivity within the organization is scalability. Thomson says, “We reached a certain size about 10 years ago where the scope and scale of the programs that we were supporting had really exceeded our capability of managing them through any old-fashioned method, no matter how robust the process was supporting that.” The three areas of focus to enable scalability were:

- A definitive single source of truth
- Process to launch
- Cohesive supply chain

Thomson says that information was scattered everywhere: in files, spreadsheets, emails and with various people. “There wasn’t a way to cohesively understand what is the real truth of a product. In our launch process once we got to manufacturing, it was there through our ERP, but leading into that, it was really scattershot. We needed a definitive single source of truth.”

Specific processes to usher the products through development and finalization with their customers had to happen. Thomson says, “All of those details need to be managed, and it’s really important to get them right because once you start manufacturing the product, it’s very difficult to change something midway through due to the volumes that we’re working with. Making sure that every bit of information is robustly defined, reviewed and approved was really important as we scaled.”

Growing internationally brought its own set of challenges to the supply chain. Communication had to be quick, drawing on a single source of truth for multiple partners in multiple time zones. Thomson observes,



“Email is dangerous and not necessarily conducive to speed when you’re talking about specific product information.”

FROM CUSHIONS TO FABRICS

Arden has branched out into offering retail outdoor fabrics. Says Sharpe, “Roughly three years ago we went aggressively into the fabric space. We knew that there was a gap in affordable, premium fabrics that have much more durability and performance than the market standard. We introduced EverTru® in 2017, an acrylic and solution-dyed polyester (SDP) fabric. Today, we have an annual full line of acrylics and SDPs, and we work directly with over 30 of the top furniture makers in the world for retail and specialty customers.”

Thomson agrees. “EverTru fabrics provide leverage with our retail customers in that we can support them with a full vertical operation from the design, development and production management of the fabrics all the way to the finished product.”

DIGITAL AND SUSTAINABLE

In 2016, Arden made the decision to commit to e-commerce. That meant loading several hundred more products and all their accompanying attributes numbering in the hundreds of thousands, into PLM to carry out the vision. It paid off, quickly becoming an integral part of their business. When Covid-19 shut physical stores

CHALLENGES

- + Product info scattered in disparate locations
- + Scale of retail programs exceeded capability of current tools
- + Launch process lacked checks with respect to errors
- + International communication difficult
- + Supply chain was expanding
- + Changing market conditions and consumer trends

down, Arden's e-commerce operation online site was able to easily handle the traffic due to the infrastructure already in place.

Thomson explains how their own Selections brand of outdoor cushions and pillows fits into the traditional retail market and into e-commerce. Arden is supporting some of their core retailers' online sites. "We're excited to see our Selections brand grow, and key to that is our being able to manage items that exist at multiple retailers at the same time." Previously, the model was a narrow assortment of one set of items per private label retailer. Thomson says, "This was the first time that we took product across multiple retail companies at the same time, which drove its own complexity."

PLM is contributing to sustainability practices. Thomson says, "In the e-commerce space, we're seeing the desire to reduce one's carbon footprint. To that end, we've launched our Profoam™ cushion line, which ships in a compressed format, reducing freight and the cost to the consumer along with a reduction in carbon emissions. We're also focusing on durability for long-lasting products. Our company has really evolved since its inception and a central part of that is being able to manage our data and understand how that data flows over time."

THE PLM PROGRESSION

Thomson says, "It's been a journey over the last decade that we've been working with Centric Software. At the very beginning of our PLM experience, it was all about product data management for us. We have hundreds of attributes for any given product in our portfolio. At the time we were managing maybe 45 to 50 attributes, and we were doing it by spreadsheets, email, and paper files sitting in a cabinet. We brought that all together with the help of Centric at the time of implementation, into a 21st century digital system, which gave us tremendous visibility. Then we started layering in different functionality of Centric PLM over a 12-year period, even working with Centric from time to time to suggest where we wanted to go with PLM as it would affect our industry."

The layering followed this trajectory: in the beginning, Arden used PLM for product data. They then moved pretty quickly into product costing. Then product development followed, defining engineering specifications, sampling requests and also the post-product development process before launch. As the supply chain expanded, PLM enabled international sourcing and the visibility into the process that they needed. With e-commerce, Arden started using the system in a more robust way, which remains in place today. Thomson says, "We continue to find new ways to leverage process and technology with Centric: the partner we selected to grow with and think about our business several years from now, not just what's coming up in the next 18 months."

PLM CONTINUES TO BRING BENEFITS

"The ability for PLM to keep records of past season products, material attributes, fabric requests and drawings is incredibly useful when we need to look back on a certain season from a few years ago to find specific information about a material or a product," says Sharpe. "It's super critical to be able to do that."

Sharpe explains how a tracking number in PLM is assigned to a fabric as soon as it is created, and material attributes like fabric composition, yarn, width, weight, producing mill, customer, timeline, date of development and approval are assigned to it. When it goes into a retail program, it then gets a formal part number and information like annual volumes, plant locations and other pertinent data as it

relates to the program itself is added. "The great thing about this is, all of those original attributes are tied into the parent part number, so you can always go back and track the actual development of a formal part number if you needed to, down the road".

"Aside from the general materials library, I use it for all of our customer sample yardage requests. When our Asia office comes into work in the morning, they can see all the requests my team submitted the day before since it's a live system. I've created custom views which track all of our active fabrics that are in all the programs—their progress through the stages of pre-production, and then over into bulk production. I can see the status of these active items at any time."

When asked which departments are using Centric PLM, Sharpe says, "I can't even come up with what teams don't use PLM! There's so much critical information in PLM related to our customers, our suppliers our retailer programs, all of our fabrics and items." He begins to list the teams. "Supply chain definitely, compliance, customer service, sales, engineering, IT, textile designers, our entire Asia office. So, I honestly cannot think of one..." Thomson concurs. "Everybody, even our president sometimes uses PLM to reference information."

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RESULTS

- + One digital source of the truth housed in PLM
- + All teams are on PLM
- + Workflows encompass approvals and checks
- + Seamless international communication
- + Transparency in product development and post-PD
- + Data enables sustainable e-comm shipping practices
- + Easy pivot to remote working when Covid-19 hit



Arden

(www.ardencompanies.com)

Every company has a foundation story. This one is ours. Bob and Martie Sachs, 23 and 22 years of age respectively, founded Arden in 1964 as a broker and distributor of household cleaning products. Today, Arden is a leading outdoor cushion and pillow provider for the US, Canada and Mexico. Lowe's, Home Depot, Walmart are a few of our key customers. We produce both retailer private label brands and also our own national brands. Arden has 12 facilities across the globe with 4 manufacturing sites in the US.

We have continued to expand across the U.S. and overseas, allowing us to provide optimal distribution and find talented individuals across North America and Asia. Wherever they are in the world, employees stay connected via the latest technology to work together on many projects. In each city, state, and country that Arden calls home, our company strives to improve its community and believes in doing business right as we deliver products that are always on time, complete, and correct.

In 2004, we opened our first office overseas in Gongming, China to expand our manufacturing operations in Asia. In 2008 we divested other businesses to focus solely on outdoor products. Arden expanded its Asia operations in 2011 by opening an office in Taipei, the largest city in Taiwan. The Taiwan team works directly with Arden's fabric suppliers as well as the printing, weaving, dyeing and finishing mills to ensure we meet all quality standards and deadlines for production schedules. We take great pride in this involvement with the global supply chain as a whole and the value it adds for our customers.

In 2019, Arden Companies joined the Central Garden & Pet family.

ABOUT CENTRIC

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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 PLMTM, 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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