

FRANKIES BIKINIS

FRANKIES BIKINIS TAKES THE PLUNGE INTO EFFICIENCY WITH CENTRIC PLM™

A SWIMWEAR BRAND GAINS VISIBILITY INTO
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ENABLED BY TECHNOLOGY

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"Our product data was scattered all over the place. It ranged from Excel spreadsheets to Google Sheets to random binders of printed pieces of paper with little sketches and dates on them. It was really hard to manage."

Kalin Mowry, Director of Production and Development at Frankies Bikinis describes the state of product development prior to PLM. Using spreadsheets and email wasn't ideal for such a fast-growing company.

FROM IDEA TO REALITY

Founded by Francesca Aiello, who hails from Malibu, Frankies is based in Venice, California. Aiello grew up on the beach and in 2012, began her mission to create the perfect bikini after her mother encouraged her to have swimsuits custom made. Soon, she was designing bikinis for friends and gained even more momentum when she began to showcase her swimsuit designs on Instagram. After creating two collections, Francesca made her Miami Swim Week debut in 2014, making her the youngest designer ever to do so.

FAMOUS PLAYERS

Francesca Aiello's designs are sported by supermodels and celebrities including Gigi and Bella Hadid, Hailey Bieber, and Kylie and Kendall Jenner. Mowry enthuses, "Just recently, JLo was seen in our swimwear, which is huge for me because I grew up admiring her so much!" She continues, "Frankies has created the most perfect silhouettes for any customer, any age, to feel sexy and confident and be able to wear these fun, flirty prints at the beach. People get stopped and asked 'who makes that swimsuit?'" The brand has evolved into a beach lifestyle brand, expanding product offerings to include ready-to-wear clothing, footwear and beauty. The company produces their products in Los Angeles and South and Central America. Frankies Bikinis designs can be found in select retail boutiques nationwide and online at their website.

BRINGING IN A MODERN TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

Mowry brings extensive experience in product development and production, having worked for mid-sized or startup companies. Upon joining Frankies, one of her primary goals was to move all of the design and development in-house. "Prior, we were working with third party contractors, and the lead times were up to eight weeks. From previous experience I knew that that could be minimized to four."

She built the case for getting PLM and building her team, simultaneously. "Not only did we need a great design and development group, we needed a system to track and accelerate it. The spreadsheets and basically all of the archaic ways of tracking weren't really suitable for how quickly we were growing," says Mowry. "In 2020 our business increased by 70%—I would say about 300 SKUs. With that rapid increase, it was even more challenging to track the design and development that went into those new styles. That was when we raised the flag and said that we can't use spreadsheets for this anymore. Centric was the solution."



THE DATA IS ALL REALLY EASY TO MANIPULATE TO GIVE YOU THE PERFECT REPORT THAT YOUR EXECUTIVE TEAM IS LOOKING FOR.



CHALLENGES

- + Rapid growth of business
- + Difficult to track product development
- + Pulling together different reports was time-consuming
- + Getting designs into the workflow was cumbersome
- + Missed deadlines
- + Product data is scattered all over

To get to that point, the team at Frankies Bikinis reviewed several PLM providers, but decided on Centric PLM because of its out-of-the-box configurability and the ability to meet their current and future needs. Mowry states, “We chose Centric because we wanted a long-term partner whose solution can grow and expand as we do. Having all the data at our fingertips will make it easy to share documents and calendars with other departments, making the process extremely streamlined and cohesive.”

GETTING UP AND RUNNING

Mowry describes the implementation. “We did the onboarding with Centric. It was a very robust training—a couple hours a week for about two to three months that we devoted to learning the whole operation of the system and really seeing what we wanted to configure. From there, the Centric team did a massive upload of all of the SKUs that are housed in our ERP system. Once those uploads were done, we were able to drive into each style: add the colorways, the BOMs...”

“I would say that it’s a very intuitive software. Wherever you think something’s going to be, it usually is there. It’s familiar ground for anybody on my team. I know they’ve worked with a few other PLM systems before and they have all said that using Centric seems to be the most seamless and straightforward.”

INDISPENSABLE

Centric has made its way into multiple facets of the company. Says Mowry, “It’s being utilized, I would say, in every design development opportunity that we possibly can use it. We concept and mood board initially with Francesca who is the creative director, and then from there it goes to the development team where SKU creation, CAD, line sheets happen. We use the bill of materials to determine what our cost is going to be as well. So that then helps us integrate with our ERP system. We use PLM when setting retails and wholesales and strategizing on our margins.”

Tech pack creation takes up a significant amount of time and effort in any fashion company. Centric PLM facilitates this task. Mowry explains, “Another amazing attribute is the tech pack feature. This is a tool that has saved us a lot of time because you can essentially upload a template, and it’ll populate all of the pieces that go into a garment and then you’re able to update from there. Like if the construction is single needle or double needle, all of your points of measure... We have found that it’s easier on our technical team to approve and reject a sample from there and then quickly download the PDF and send those comments, rather than batch-sending Microsoft Excel tech packs.”

REPORTS ANY WAY YOU WANT THEM

Mowry describes the benefits of being able to easily pull together different reports in PLM. “Our COO loves a good report, and our creative director really loves visuals. I’m able to pull a data driven report for the COO based on SKU counts, coverages—whether it’s minimal, mid or full coverage—I’m able to pull by colorways and product offerings within that colorway. I can even pull by category. My creative director loves that we pull all of the CADs out and basically showcase the line to her that way, and she can bring merchandise that she wants or drop bodies from there, and it’s very simple and quick. The data is all really easy to manipulate to give you the perfect report that your executive team is looking for.”

TIME SAVINGS, ILLUSTRATED

The Adobe Illustrator plugin allows the designers to continue to work in the environment where they are comfortable. “One of the best features of Centric and particularly with the design team, is that any CAD illustration that you update in Illustrator will automatically update in Centric with the Adobe plugin. For example, if you’re changing the width of a strap on a dress or you want to add a hook to a neck band instead of a tie, you can update it in Illustrator, click ‘save’ and then it pushes it through to Centric and updates that CAD as well. It saves you a lot of these little time-consuming tasks that really add up during the day—having to save the CAD to Illustrator and then download it, and upload it into the line sheet as well as ERP. So, many, many hours are saved with that feature.”

KEEPING EVERYONE ON TRACK

Mowry says, “Besides creating your style, your sketch, your prints or colorways and manage the merchandising side of the business, PLM also helps tremendously when it comes to tracking lead times and making sure that everybody’s hitting their deadlines. There is a great feature in Centric, where it can ping team members and remind them of their upcoming due dates for the week, the month, what milestones they’re looking to hit. This feature has made me feel like less of a micromanager which has been amazing, and then just seeing the results when it comes to getting protos in, getting samples delivered on time and getting tech packs or production calendar approved.

“Our whole team has just been singing the praises of Centric because of the pain points of tracking something on multiple spreadsheets and then not having it align or some of the information is misrepresented. Having one place where essentially the truth resides, has been a tremendous help for the team and I know that everybody has just been super grateful for this product.”

RESULTS

- + Visibility into the whole design and development process
- + Able to track all SKUs
- + Different types of reports easily pulled together
- + Designers work in Adobe Illustrator with changes automatically saved to PLM
- + All product data is in a central, digital hub



FRANKIES BIKINIS, LLC. (www.frankiesbikinis.com)

In 2012 founder Francesca Aiello began her mission to create the perfect bikini, gaining momentum when she began to showcase her swimsuit designs on Instagram. After creating two collections, Francesca became the youngest designer to ever debut at Miami Swim Week in 2014. Her designs are worn by supermodels and celebrities including Gigi and Bella Hadid, Hailey Bieber, and Kylie and Kendall Jenner.

Frankies Bikinis is a global online destination for fashion-forward beachwear inspired by Malibu and made in Los Angeles. Known for high-end fabrics, fashion forward shapes, and cheeky bottoms, the bikinis look great on everybody. Since the company's inception, Francesca Aiello has evolved the brand into a beach lifestyle brand, expanding product offerings to include ready-to-wear clothing and beauty. Frankies Bikinis' designs can be found in better retail boutiques nationwide including Revolve, Intermix, Free People, Kith, and Browns. The largest selection of Frankies Bikinis can be found at frankiesbikinis.com.

ABOUT CENTRIC SOFTWARE (www.centricsoftware.com)

From its headquarters in Silicon Valley, Centric Software provides a Digital Transformation Platform for the most prestigious names in fashion, retail, footwear, luxury, outdoor and consumer goods including cosmetics, personal care, food and beverage. Centric's flagship Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) platform, Centric 8, delivers enterprise-class merchandise planning, product development, sourcing, quality and collection management functionality tailored for fast-moving consumer industries. Centric SMB provides innovative PLM technology and key industry learnings for emerging brands. Centric Visual Innovation Platform (VIP) offers a new fully visual and digital experience for collaboration and decision-making and includes the Centric Buying Board to transform internal buying sessions and maximize retail value and the Centric Concept Board for driving creativity and evolving product concepts. 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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