



"IF IT ISN'T IN CENTRIC, IT DOESN'T COUNT!"
KEEN KICKS FUTURE INTO HIGH GEAR WITH CENTRIC PLM



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“Our product development process was Excel and email-heavy, leading to a lot of confusion about which version of what document was sent when. We had ‘many sources of truth’ and it was slowing us down. We needed a solution to keep pace with current company growth and set a foundation for scalable future growth.”

Aaron Hellickson, Product Development Technology Manager at KEEN, recalls that the company’s methods for managing product development were unable to meet the challenges of shrinking time to market, globalization of product portfolios and margin pressures.

Today, KEEN is experiencing impressive benefits after just one season powered by Centric PLM. The company has streamlined its complex global supply chain and dramatically improved efficiency, with one team able to cut their report output time by 50%. Problems are now identified and solved earlier during product development.

“PLM gives other parts of the business visibility to what’s happening on the product creation floor,” says Hellickson. “It has opened up communication between the different stakeholders across the organization.”

How did KEEN transform their operations with Centric PLM?

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

KEEN, an outdoor lifestyle brand based in Portland, Oregon, was founded in 2003 on the strength of the rugged hybrid Newport sandal. The company has expanded its categories to kids, boots, bags, work gear and apparel.

KEEN is a values-driven organization, proud to promote quality, integrity, health, caring and a pioneering spirit. Today, KEEN retails products in the USA, Canada, Europe, Asia and online.

TAILORED FOR FOOTWEAR AND APPAREL

Faced with the increasing complexity associated with the company’s growth and market pressures, KEEN knew they needed to do something to streamline their operations and keep pace with the competition.

Managing operations with Excel and emails was no longer sufficient.

“Speed to market was one of the biggest challenges we were facing. We needed a solution to facilitate innovation and forward planning that the whole company could rally around,” Hellickson explains.

“Large numbers of different reports had to be generated manually from Excel spreadsheets, which may not even have been accurate due to transcription errors and it would take days to roll everything up.”

KEEN took their time considering different options and evaluated several different vendors, on multiple occasions.

“We looked a few years ago and then we looked again. We finally chose Centric PLM because it was built from the ground up for footwear and apparel. It is tailored for our industry and speaks our language.”

“We had to spend time explaining concepts like ‘models’ and ‘colorways’ and ‘size ranges’ to the other providers,” he continues. “Then they would come back with compromises or say that it would require customization to get their solutions to do what we needed. Centric is configurable out of the box – we felt like we could get moving a lot faster and up and running quickly.”

BRINGING TEAMS TOGETHER

Implementation was on time and on budget. For KEEN, the Centric team was a group of trusted advisers guiding them every step of the way during the implementation.



WE’RE STARTING TO SEE THE VALUE IN THE QUICK REPORTING AND A SINGLE SOURCE OF THE TRUTH. TO FULLY-UTILIZE EVERYTHING THAT CENTRIC PLM HAS TO OFFER.



CHALLENGES

- + Needed to streamline operations to speed time to market
- + Lacked visibility into in-season plans and goals against actuals
- + Needed to improve slow reporting process
- + Wasting time on administrative tasks instead of product innovation
- + Product data visibility, accuracy and version control problems
- + Slow sample tracking and review process

As Hellickson explains, "Centric was receptive to our requests and most importantly, brought best-practices from previous implementations. They were able to help us accelerate our timeline and avoid pitfalls based on their vast wealth of experience. They definitely put in the extra hours for us when something came up and when we needed them, they were there."

He continues, "The implementation brought a lot of people from around the company together, which in and of itself was a big feat."

CENTRIC IS CENTRAL

Centric PLM has become an integral part of all of KEEN's internal business operations in a short amount of time, getting multiple users across various regions up and running quickly and shining a spotlight on product development visibility where before there was none.

"PLM is used to manage design and development, line management, materials, color, costing, merchandising and our regional teams. It has helped our planning process. We're able to create a plan and give teams more visibility to make it stick," says Hellickson.

"It is a living plan that has targets and goals. People can add to the plan and we can move with it through time versus having to remake the plan at every stage. It enables us to keep up our momentum and each team can do their part without slowing anyone else down."

A single source of the truth is key for KEEN. It ensures that the product information accessed by teams from around the globe is up to date and reliable. This has cut down on the complexity that comes with operating across multiple countries.

As Hellickson says, "There is now an internal rule: if it isn't in Centric, it doesn't count!"

ON THE FAST TRACK

Centric PLM has enabled KEEN to slash reporting time and eliminate both costly mistakes and reduce time spent chasing after the latest version of product information.

Says Hellickson, "PLM has improved speed and accuracy in reporting. Previously, we would have to piece together reports from different countries. If there was one mistake, we would spend most of our time figuring out where that mistake was instead of analyzing the report. People needed different views of tons of information. Now we are able to select specific views for those who need it versus sending out massive documents with possible errors. Data can be analyzed directly in Centric. It has saved a lot of time."

KEEN was also able to drastically streamline their sample tracking and management, which was extremely time-consuming and lacked visibility prior to implementing Centric PLM.

Hellickson notes, "We have much better visibility of the quantity, origins, variations and expected delivery times of samples. That was much harder to put your finger on previously. Sometimes the names of colors can be more fanciful than descriptive, but we now have the ability to track what swatch was ordered, with visual images."

STEPPING FORWARD

KEEN and Centric will continue to collaborate, with Centric providing guidance and assistance along the way as KEEN gathers speed with the PLM project.

"We will continue our partnership with Centric in the future and will engage with the support team on an ongoing basis as we further configure the system," says Hellickson.

"We're anticipating the next phase of implementation which includes using our mobile apps across our departments and teams. We've started experimenting with them and the clear potential for efficiencies with mobility is exciting."

He concludes, "Centric can act as a natural hub for us if we want to integrate other systems as we grow. There is definitely a lot of optimism around the system. We're starting to get people from around the business who want to use it more - seeing the value in the quick reporting and a single source of the truth. I think we are just beginning to fully-utilize everything that Centric PLM has to offer."

RESULTS

- + Increased visibility into plans and real-time results
- + Plan created at the beginning of the season and results compared in real time
- + Improved data accuracy and eliminated version control issues
- + Reduced reporting output time by 50%
- + Teams can collaborate easily with a 'single source of the truth'
- + Faster, more efficient and easier to track samples tracking and reviews





ABOUT KEEN

Driven by a passion for life outside, KEEN is a values-led, independently owned brand from Portland, Ore., that's on a mission to create original and versatile products, improve lives, and inspire outside adventure. Founded in 2003, it launched a revolution in the footwear industry with the introduction of the Newport adventure sandal and has donated more than \$15 million to non-profit organizations and causes around the world to promote responsible outdoor recreation, including conservation efforts to protect open spaces. KEEN strives to show the world through its products and its actions that a business for good can actually be good for business. By giving back, reducing impact, and activating communities and individuals to protect the places where we work and play, KEEN puts its values in motion and takes action to leave the world a better place.

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 2018 and Frost & Sullivan's Global Retail, Fashion, and Apparel PLM Product Differentiation Excellence Award in 2016 and 2012. Red Herring named Centric to its Top 100 Global list in 2013, 2015, and 2016.



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