

ACCURATE PRODUCT INFORMATION, ALWAYS AVAILABLE: IN FLORENCE AS IN SINGAPORE

VALUE OPPORTUNITIES

- *To overcome the limitations of informal product data management, fragmented and isolated from corporate data flow*
- *To rapidly access all product data and share it with production partners*
- *To improve data quality, reducing the need for data duplication*

TXT E-SOLUTIONS RESPONSE

- *ModelForm*
- *WebFrames*

RESULTS

- *Central management of product data for over 100 internal users and 100 suppliers*
- *Univocal, complete data*
- *Immediate data use*
- *Management of versatile, customized reports to display data according to company division needs*
- *Integration of product data with Stealth3000*

Corporate Profile

Champion was founded in 1919 in New York State by Abe Feinbloom and his father under the original name of the Knickerbocker Knitting Company. But its true history began in the 1930s when Champion began supplying Universities and military schools. In a short time the company became a leader in sports and technical wear. In 1979 Champion began exporting to Europe, a success repeated over many years due to a top quality stylish product range. In 2001, a group of managers, headed by Sauro Mambriani, former CEO of Champion

Italy, acquired the trademark for Europe, Africa and the Middle East from the Sara Lee Corporation.

Today Champion Europe S.p.A, headed by Mambriani, has over 400 employees.

Supply Chain Context

Champion Europe is a complex and dynamic company: operating in 125 countries in the EMEA zone (Europe, Middle-East, Africa), with numerous subsidiaries to handle all promotion and sales aspects. Production is entrusted to carefully selected European suppliers (particularly Portugal, Turkey and Italy) and in Asia. Design is centralized upon Italy, specifically at corporate headquarters in Florence, together with all the subsequent stages, from sampling to final production.

Florence creates the collection for the entire EMEA area, diversified by each country (for example in terms of colours and sizes), according to the different sales strategies of foreign subsidiaries.

To support such an extensive global network, with rapid development schedules typical of the fashion industry as a whole, Champion Europe decided to develop a Product Data Management system. The aim?

To create a virtual environment in which all product information can be managed: from prototype to production. The project began in 1999 at the Florence HQ, involving the design, planning and costing departments, extending to the entire company: sales offices and suppliers worldwide.

The Champion Challenge

The requirement is the central organization of product data, overcoming the limitations of paperwork. No more technical worksheets compiled manually in Excel and sent to suppliers, but a dynamic worksheet archiving all relevant style data, immediately available to all internal and external divisions responsible for development.

The chosen solution was TXT-Product Data Management with the following modules:

- **ModelForm:** software to manage technical worksheets, pooling all product data;
- **WebFrames:** web extension of the, for remote access by users via the Internet.

Why TXT?

The ease of use: this is the main reason for the choice. Designed for companies in the fashion industry, ModelForm and WebFrames, in comparison with other products evaluated, offers greater familiarity and perfect adaptability to the company logics.

The Solution

Live after just a few months implementation, ModelForm was completely operational in winter '99, ready to manage the 2000 autumn-winter collection.

The project is extensive: it includes a ModelForm central server, located in Florence, and other servers in the Italian branch of Carpi, other European branches (Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Spain, Greece) and Singapore.

The entire system has

Champion Europe

around 100 internal users. Some branches work directly on collection development (Singapore and Dublin for example), others -more strictly involved with sales- access the ModelForm database in order to key in national data (such as prices), select styles (articles), colours and sizes marketed in that country, and to print catalogues for distribution to sales agents. By exploiting the potential of WebFrames, Champion soon aims to make research available to all users in all overseas branches and the display of product data in the web environment, as is currently the case for the Ghent office in Belgium. From outside the company, the system is used via web by about a hundred European and Asian suppliers who access technical

worksheets and all data useful for production. To guarantee controlled data access, internal and external users have customized profiles in line with their role in development or marketing of the collection: for example, some users can create new product codes, others can modify them, others can work on certain phases of the collection but not all, and so on. In addition, a menswear designer can only access and work on menswear styles. For each fashion season (autumn-winter and spring-summer) about 1000 articles are held on the ModelForm database, pooling all useful data concerning colours, sizes, sample orders, processing, bills of materials and costs. Based on the information in the ModelForm database, Champion

generates its product catalogue on DVD and via web (useful for agents who avoid taking hard copy to the customer and have access to up-to-date information at all times) plus reports and customized print-outs: various versions of the guidebook (with or without prices, for example), style lists (lists provided to development divisions to check colours and sizes), or information provided to suppliers (reports with bills of materials and stitching detail, buttons, logos, labels). Each sales branch produces its own reports (each country has its own price lists, for example). In addition, the solution acts as master for sales statistics and as the main database for other systems including the ERP Stealth3000 system.

“The benefits are self-evident: data management is no longer informal (fragmented and distributed) but is centralized. Product data can be used immediately by over 200 users and information can be checked promptly. At corporate level, we have practically eliminated the need for data duplication.”

V. Banici - Champion Europe IT Systems

“Internal and external users are highly satisfied. By management of versatile, heavily customized reports only directly relevant data is displayed: access is available to a whole series of data that did not exist before. Suppliers, who previously had to wait for hard copies can now access worksheets in ModelForm directly via web, and can begin production immediately. The success of the project is also the result of a close partnership with TXT. We have been using the solution for the past 12 collections and the service has always been excellent.”

I. Morvillo - Champion Europe IT Systems