Fashion retailer COOLCAT speeds time to market with iShopShape

Product Lifecycle Management solution streamlines processes around the world

Haarlem/Netherlands. May 2011 – COOLCAT, a large Netherlands-based fashion and retail company, has chosen iShopShape's ChainReaction SOURCE to harmonise and streamline its global product management and supply chain processes. The fully web-based product lifecycle management (PLM) solution enables COOLCAT to more quickly plan and develop its fashions and collaborate easily with all its offices and suppliers around the globe. As a result, the solution has allowed COOLCAT to significantly accelerate its supply chain and get its fashions into the shops much faster.

COOLCAT designs and sells young fashion on its website as well as in a network of 130 shops in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Luxemburg. It also has offices in China, India and Bangladesh as well as multiple suppliers. Prior to the implementation of ChainReaction SOURCE, COOLCAT staff produced and emailed Microsoft Excel-based planning and supply chain reports for their area of the business alone, making it difficult to have an overview of potential bottlenecks or delays. Along with the fact that the spreadsheet method was not exception-driven, an additional challenge was that some of the reports contradicted each other, so there were several versions of the truth but no real transparency.

"This situation was causing delays as well as lost productivity," comments Judith van Alphen, COOLCAT's Manager Buying Controlling and the project leader behind the implementation of the new PLM system. "With badly organised processes and no global overview of a product's lifecycle, it was often a struggle for us to deliver the right products at the right time."

Judith van Alphen and her team evaluated several PLM and workflow management systems in terms of their usability, cost-effectiveness and breadth of functionality. "Right from the outset, we were really impressed with

the product's usability and with the team behind iShopShape," remembers Judith van Alphen. "After several meetings with the iShopShape team, it was clear to COOLCAT that the team had a level of expertise that was very detailed. Their deep knowledge of the fashion industry is a big differentiator to other vendors in the market. And their knowledge in the fields of sourcing, merchandise planning, buying and retail made the implementation run very smoothly."

"Shuffling Excel spreadsheets is now a thing of the past," adds Judith van Alphen. "One of the solution's biggest advantages is its range of functionality. That enables us to manage every aspect of the process, such merchandise planning, product development with measurements and size set approvals, requests for quotes from suppliers, quality management and purchase order management." As the system is entirely web-based, COOLCAT staff and suppliers are all working on the same centralized platform, helping to streamline processes and facilitate collaboration. With optimized communications between COOLCAT's headquarters and its subsidiaries and suppliers in China, India and Bangladesh, the company has been able to significantly accelerate its time to market while boosting productivity and reducing errors.

COOLCAT has already integrated ChainReaction SOURCE with its ERP and freight forwarder systems. As a result, the head office staff can manage all the steps in each process from a single, easy-to-use workflow dashboard. "The workflow management is one of the best things about this solution," says Judith van Alphen. "The system actively alerts users if a bottleneck is likely to occur in the supply chain, enabling them to take quick action to avert delays." The system also gives users an overview of the ways in which a possible delay will affect other processes further down the line.

"Our objectives with the system were to improve control over the critical path for samples and purchase orders; to optimize communication between all parties involved; and to reduce errors," concludes Judith van Alphen. "iShopShape has helped us achieve these goals while dramatically reducing our time to market."

"We were just as impressed with COOLCAT as they were with us," says Tom van Soest, Director PLM Division at iShopShape. "They had clear goals and a highly professional approach to the planning and implementation processes, helping to ensure the project was completed quickly and efficiently."

About COOLCAT

COOLCAT, founded in 1979 and headquartered in Houten, the Netherlands, is a leading young fashion company active with hundreds of stores in Belgium, Luxemburg and France. COOLCAT offers its teenager target audience monthly new collections through its outlets. COOLCAT has full control of the entire production process, from design to production and logistics and manages the processes from the Netherlands and through its own network of sourcing offices throughout Asia. COOLCAT is part of the Excellent Retail Brands Group together with America Today, M&S mode and Wonderwoman. For more information please visit www.coolcat.nl

About iShopShape

iShopShape is a global provider of Fashion PLM and retail execution solutions that optimize the processes from design to retail. With its extended product portfolio, iShopShape empowers its customers to effectively develop ranges that perform well using the unique visual technology. Connecting the essential fashion business processes from early design to actual sourcing and producing with web based products often results in shorter lead times and effective merchandise planning. iShopShape's integrated solutions help customers to make more efficient use of each of their stores and shop-in-shop retail spaces. Leading retail customers of iShopShape are well-known chains including **C&A, Perry Sport, Peek & Cloppenburg, Kaufhof, Bijenkorf and Takko**. They use iShopShape technology to built ranges and optimize communications with their individual stores and outlets, leading to conversion ratios of up to 30 per cent. Prestigious brand owners like **O'Neill, Adidas, Puma, Garcia, s.Oliver**, have been able to streamline their vital business processes with iShopShape resulting in cost effective increase of sales performance. Further information is available at www.ishopshape.com.