



Customer Profile

Rembrandt Suits finds made-to-measure fit with Infor M3



Facts at a glance

Product: Infor M3

Industry: Fashion

Country: New Zealand

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—Alistair Johnson, Information Manager, Rembrandt

About the company

Rembrandt is a market leader in the pursuit of making men look good. The company’s brands, including Rembrandt and Wayward Heir, are present in the most highly esteemed stores in Australia and New Zealand such as David Jones, Myer, and Kirkcaldies, as well as in independent retailers and Rembrandt-owned stores. In total, more than 400 retailers are stocked with garments crafted in Rembrandt’s own production facility or made under contract by specialist manufacturers overseas. To keep pace with international trends in menswear, Rembrandt’s design team frequently visits the fashion capitals of the world and the best fabric mills in Europe. For more information, please visit: www.rembrandt.co.nz.

Setting the strategy

Rembrandt has built its reputation on delivering a range of top-quality tailored clothing since the 1940s, when it first opened its doors and started trading as a small bespoke garment establishment in Wellington, New Zealand. Over the years, the company has evolved and expanded, and its range now includes shirts, ties, casual wear and accessories such as leather goods. Daily delivery of its product range to retail customers in Australia and New Zealand is driven at the core by a powerful and intelligent business software engine—Infor® M3.

Business benefits

Since going live on the Infor solution, Rembrandt has been able to significantly reduce its operating costs and improve visibility on critical business information relating to manufacturing and supply chain processes.

“We’re very happy and impressed with the Infor M3 implementation,” says Alistair Johnson, information manager for Rembrandt. “The solution has met the parameters of what we were looking for in an enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution and has allowed us to deal with the operational complexities that are specific to the fashion industry—that’s the really attractive part of the Infor solution.

“Since going live, we’ve been able to tightly integrate all activities needed to handle the business of making menswear. We’ve also been able to define our manufacturing processes and procedures to an incredible level of detail, which is very useful, particularly for our bespoke manufacturing,” remarks Johnson.

Before switching to Infor, Rembrandt was using a locally-developed DOS-based business software system. This had dozens of other miscellaneous packages built around it and required manual interfaces to push and pull the data in and out.

"Over a five-year period, the system will have paid for itself with the savings we've made, which is a great return on investment."

**—Alistair Johnson,
Information Manager, Rembrandt**

"One of the greatest risks with the previous system was that it was unique and we were struggling to grow our business as its capabilities only stretched so far. In comparison, the new Infor solution has addressed our growth needs by providing us with much greater visibility on critical business information. It's also helped us reduce costs by cutting time-to-market. In fact, over a five-year period, the system will have paid for itself with the savings we've made, which is a great return on investment," says Johnson.

How Rembrandt works

Rembrandt's success comes from understanding the principles of classic tailoring and combining these with modern designs and technology, as well as cloth from the world's finest mills.

The company employs more than 100 staff, with around 40% active users of the Infor solution. It operates a factory in New Zealand, where a majority of the bespoke items are made, as well as other highly customised products. The company also subcontract manufactures at factories in China, where mostly ready-to-wear garments are made for the Australian and New Zealand markets.

Of the 150,000 items of clothing Rembrandt sells each year, around 10% fall into the bespoke or tailored manufacturing category in which customers can choose from a vast range of fabrics and linings coupled with more than 100 styling options to achieve the perfect fit and look. On average, Rembrandt sets up approximately 30,000 stock keeping units (SKUs) annually for the items it ships throughout the year.

"The quantity per SKU can be very small, so we've had to work very hard to reduce the cost of setting these up to a minimal amount. This task has been made much simpler with the Infor solution's entry and interfacing functionality," confirms Johnson.

Why Infor

Rembrandt chose Infor following an extensive global search for an ERP solution designed for fashion companies with complex supply chains that involve sourcing, manufacturing, distributing and retailing apparel.

"Infor was chosen simply because it had the functionality we needed, the price was achievable, and the company was large enough for us to have peace of mind that it was going to stay around to back up its products. We also wanted a vendor that had a local presence," says Johnson.

Infor M3 is a comprehensive, integrated business information system that covers the main business processes within fashion companies like Rembrandt. This includes product development, demand management, customer relationship management (CRM), planning, sourcing, raw material procurement, production, warehouse management, distribution and finance.

At the core of the Infor M3 solution is the Infor Enterprise Management System, which integrates all the activities needed to manage a business, from supplier to customer, from shop floor to executive suite. The solution links demand management and CRM to comprehensive planning. It also incorporates most aspects of supply chain management and includes comprehensive, tightly integrated financial management and control functionality.

Since implementation was completed, Johnson confirms that Rembrandt has achieved significantly better information visibility in terms of product definition.

"With our previous system, we had a dossier of detailed 20-page master documents that were prepared in advance of manufacturing each season's range, with each outlining exactly how a particular garment was to be made. For each variation, such as a different coloured fabric, an additional document was attached providing further details, like which buttons were to be used with the different coloured fabric. This process required a significant amount of documentation to go to the factory floor, making it difficult for managers to maintain and keep track of important information.

“Now, with the Infor solution, we can create a single document for a jacket that contains all the specific information about the various ways it can be made. As the jacket travels through the manufacturing process, the information travels with it, which helps operations run much more smoothly. It also now takes 75% less time than previously to create this documentation,” says Johnson.

Johnson adds that the Infor solution also plays a key role in helping Rembrandt with the complexity around warehouse management.

“Within a particular SKU, we might have 50 jackets that are all made of the same cloth and are the same size. While they appear to look exactly the same, each jacket can have subtle variations such as customer-specific branding. We can now easily track garments via serialisation to ensure we ship the correct items to customers, and we’re able to go right back through the supply chain to see where components came from. We struggled to find this functionality in any system other than the Infor system,” says Johnson.

The implementation

Rembrandt went live on the Infor solution in September 2008, following an implementation that ran relatively smoothly despite a six month hiatus on the project.

“Around six months into implementation, we discovered that greater functionality was due to be released in an upcoming version of Infor M3, so we put the project on hold until we could deploy this. Once we recommenced, the implementation was straightforward. Overall, the work the Infor Professional Services team conducted was great and has delivered very good results for us,” remarks Johnson.

More recently, the company invested in Infor Lawson BI to further improve visibility on information and gain more of an analytical perspective on reporting.

“We got some very quick gains out of this, which has been very positive for us. The application’s prebuilt set of reports, scorecards and key performance indicators (KPIs) allowed us to gain quicker time to benefit without substantial development effort,” confirms Johnson. “We could suddenly see sales trends and opportunities very clearly that were difficult to see before. Undoubtedly, the system has given our sales people the ability to see where sales are being made against the volumes that they are expected to achieve, as well as how well a particular range or item sold last year and the year before that compared to this year,” comments Johnson.

Rembrandt also recently implemented Infor M3 Warehouse Mobility to better manage stock and speed up the flow of goods, from goods receipt to shipping. “We use the system for managing purchase order receipting, as well as managing stock movements, stock taking, and invoicing. It has helped deliver increased speed and quality into our supply chain, with the result being further cost reductions, as well as improved delivery precision and customer service,” says Johnson.

The future

In the future, Rembrandt plans to focus on a number of operational areas where further cost reductions can be made and greater value extracted.

“Over the next couple of years, we’ll focus on automating administrative processes. For example, we plan to reduce costs around the dispatch process by integrating the Infor solution with our courier systems. Simplifying processes like this can help save a couple hours each day, which really adds up over the long term,” concludes Johnson.



641 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10011
800-260-2640
infor.com

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