



THE GIFT OF GROWTH
MUD PIE SAVES TIME AND BOOSTS
EFFICIENCY WITH CENTRIC PLM



GIFTS FOR EVERY OCCASION

Mud Pie was founded in 1988 by current CEO Marcia Miller, originally producing a small collection of ceramic gifts. Based in Stone Mountain, Georgia, Mud Pie has grown to include thousands of “delightful gifts to inspire all of life’s sparkling moments”. Mud Pie’s custom-crafted gifts and clothing for style-conscious consumers are now available in over 16,000 retail outlets around the world as well as directly to consumers online at www.mudpie.com.

With the slogan ‘Every day is a gift’, Mud Pie produces gift items for every occasion, from major holidays to everyday celebrations. Mud Pie products are inspired by cutting edge design trends, interpreted by its team of designers to create unique gifts and clothing at an affordable price point. The company contains three divisions: Mud Pie Kids, Mud Pie Home and Mud Pie Fashion.



GROWING PAINS

Mud Pie faced challenges associated with the growth of the business and reached a point where it became obvious that the company needed a PLM solution to support its design, product development and production processes.

As Katherine Bennie, Senior Home Merchandiser at Mud Pie explains, “We were working in an outdated database system and using email and Excel to communicate with overseas vendors. As we continued to grow, we had difficulties keeping track of the product lifecycle in one place. We realized that we regularly wasted a lot of time searching through emails for one little detail from months ago that we needed to make an important decision.”

“We wanted to find a more efficient and effective way to manage our SKUs across all three divisions. PLM was becoming more prominent in the industry, and other software vendors would frequently ask what PLM system we were using. This planted the seed and motivated us to begin a PLM selection project.”

“ WE ULTIMATELY SELECTED CENTRIC BECAUSE OF THE EASE OF USE AND FUNCTIONALITY OF THE SYSTEM. ”

FINDING THE PERFECT MATCH

Mud Pie used an external software ‘matchmaking’ service to compare different PLM vendors and systems, using a ratings system based on ease of use, functionality, calendar tracking abilities and inventory handling. After a series of interviews, demos, reference checks and RFPs, which narrowed their original list of vendors down to two leading contenders, Mud Pie finally selected Centric PLM.

“We ultimately selected Centric because of the ease of use and functionality of the system,” says Bennie. “We knew we would have to implement it across a variety of departments, roles and people, so it had to be easy to use while delivering the requirements we wanted in terms of tracking products and making sure they get purchased. Centric’s Adobe Illustrator integration was also very important for us, as every product originates with our creative team and we needed to make sure our designers were comfortable using the system.”

CHALLENGES

- + Growing business with expanding number of products to handle
- + Time wasted searching for information in scattered systems
- + No single place to manage every aspect of the product lifecycle
- + Lack of connectivity in meetings and in the field
- + Tight implementation timeline across three product lines

Mud Pie kicked off an implementation project with Centric Software in March 2017, and the deployment of Centric PLM was completed on schedule in September 2017. The company implemented Centric's Product Specification, Materials Management, Product Sourcing, Calendar Management and Merchandise Planning modules across all three product lines: Fashion, Kids and Home. Mud Pie's suppliers in India and China are also connected to the system.

"We were able to go live across all departments and our overseas suppliers on time, while growing all three lines, and still hit all our deadlines for the season with no major issues," says Bennie. "We're very much an "all or nothing" type of company, so we just went ahead and did it! Of course, the support of the Centric team was critical. They worked with us every step of the way and were always available to answer our queries quickly and keep up the pace of implementation."

SAVING TIME WITH INSTANT INFORMATION

Since going live in September 2017, Centric PLM has transformed the way people work at Mud Pie every day.

"We now have the whole lifecycle of a product in a single place to make it easier to manage, and we can act instantly on decisions," explains Bennie. "In meetings, we can pull up a style and see the whole history of that item. Before PLM, we would have wasted time searching emails, spreadsheets and our database for information. It's much easier to track what stage of sampling we're at, for instance."

"Time saved is the major benefit," Bennie continues. "Previously we weren't even able to bring laptops to meetings since our database couldn't be used on Wi-Fi. Now, merchandisers bring laptops and we do the actions we are talking about right there in the meeting rather than going back to our desks with a five-page to-do list. Designers can approve samples while we're discussing them which means that everyone can work more effectively. The time we save allows us to focus on activities that help us grow."



RESULTS

- + Implementation on time while growing all three product lines
- + Ability to instantly pull up information and act on decisions in meetings
- + Time freed up for activities that promote growth
- + Easy transition for designers with Adobe Illustrator integration
- + Mobile apps enhance communication during overseas trips

Mud Pie also recently adopted three of Centric's innovative PLM mobile apps: Product Notes, Fit Review and Sample Review. As Bennie notes, these are invaluable on overseas research trips.

"We have been able to use the Product Notes app while we're in India and China at fairs and booths taking photos and notes. Before, we took photos on a tablet with notes in notebooks and compiled it later. This allows us to do it right there and then, upload it to the system the same day and easily share details with suppliers."

GROWTH AND EVOLUTION

Although the implementation project has concluded, Mud Pie is now working with Centric on ways to integrate their existing purchase order system with PLM. As Bennie explains, it's an ongoing and productive relationship.

"At each step of the implementation, once we had the basics in place, we looked at how we could make the system work even better for us," says Bennie. "In the next six months to a year we will continue to evolve within the system and we don't see a time when we will not be working with Centric to hone our processes because we've seen how effective it has been."

"For companies that have serious ambitions for growth, a PLM solution is becoming a requirement rather than an option," concludes Bennie. "It's the most effective way of managing all of the moving parts in product development and retail. It also attracts people who want to work for innovative businesses. The Centric 8 system is modern, easy to use and completely online. It allows people to do their job effectively with the type of interface they're already accustomed to using in everyday life."



ABOUT MUD PIE

Mud Pie is a leading gift company, founded by current CEO, Marcia Miller in 1988. The company began with 10 living items and has since grown into an award-winning manufacturer of baby & kids apparel, fashion & accessories, and home pieces all designed to celebrate life's special moments. Mud Pie is based out of Atlanta, GA and is available in over 16,000 specialty retailers and department stores worldwide or online at www.mudpie.com.

Mud Pie products are created for the fashion forward gals, the entertainers, the home decorators, the mommas and their little ones, and most importantly, for the ladies that enjoy the finer moments in life. From holiday happenings to every day celebrations, Mud Pie has a gift that is fit for the occasion across its three lines of product – Home, Kids & Fashion.

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

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