



Keeping a Strong Foothold on Customer Service at The Clarks Companies

With industry trends making it difficult for The Clarks Companies, North America, to maintain a high level of customer service, the shoe manufacturer and retailer turned to i2 solutions to optimize its supply chain. By implementing i2 solutions, Clarks has significantly improved customer service levels with reduced inventory, and can sense and respond rapidly to market demands.

Lengthening supply chains, limited visibility into incoming products, and increasingly fickle consumer demands constantly keep retailers on their toes.

For shoe manufacturer and retailer The Clarks Companies, North America, shoe design and customer service have consistently remained the pillars of its success. However, industry trends were making Clarks' ability to continue providing the highest level of customer service increasingly difficult.

"Clarks looks at the supply chain as a means to allow it to be able to promise, fulfill, and deliver orders as the customer wants them," said Dick Scheerer, Vice President of Information Technologies for The Clarks Companies, North America. "However, like many other companies in our industry, constraints were not always allowing us to deliver all the shoes, all the time, when the customers wanted them."

Consequently, Clarks decided to look for a supply chain solutions provider.



Clarks

Challenges

- Provide visibility across the end-to-end supply chain
- Maintain high level of customer service
- Eliminate silos

Solutions

- Link SCM solutions to existing retail, order management, and inventory systems
- Establish seamless flow of communication with uniform terms, data, and language across business processes
- Gain visibility into WIP and manufacturing constraints

Results

- Improved customer service
- Increased on-time deliveries
- Reduced inventory

Company Description

Headquartered in Newton, Mass., **The Clarks Companies, North America (CCNA)** is a wholly owned subsidiary of C&J Clark International of Somerset, England, one of the largest manufacturers of casual shoes in the world, with annual sales of \$1.3 billion. CCNA distributes its Bostonian and Clarks brands to major retailers, department stores, and independent shoe stores throughout North America.

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***— Dick Scheerer
Vice President of Information Technologies
The Clarks Companies, North America***

Clarks



Why i2?

With the goal of optimizing its supply chain, Clarks utilized a third-party consultant to assist it in securing a technological solution provider that offered an end-to-end supply chain solution.

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Clarks also was impressed with i2’s ability to link into Clarks’ existing retail, order management, and inventory systems.

i2 solutions enable retailers to merchandise, source, buy, move, and sell products with greater visibility and velocity across the end-to-end supply chain, delivering increased sales and profits, improved vendor performance, and reduced logistics costs.

“We saw major improvements in on-time delivery when we implemented Demand Fulfillment,” Scheerer said. “Clarks also has realized improvements in its planning and forecasting processes from Demand Planner, while Supply Chain Planner has given us a tremendous visibility into our work-in-process and manufacturing constraints. That has enabled us to make accurate customer order promises that we can now fulfill, all while lowering our inventory.”

i2’s Contribution

Clarks implemented i2 Demand Planner,[™] i2 Supply Chain Planner,[™] and i2 Demand Fulfillment,[™] solutions that help companies to optimize their production and distribution processes by forecasting better and responding to demand variability, profitably managing their supply, and satisfying their customers better than the competition.

“The key for us was to deliver customer orders at a promise date,” Scheerer said. “The last module that we installed, Demand Fulfillment, was the key to everything we wanted to accomplish. In order for it to work, though, we needed the supply chain tools provided by Demand Planner and Supply Chain Planner. We implemented them in reverse order, and really saw the major results when we finally put the last key piece in, Demand Fulfillment, which gives us the ability to accurately predict when we can fulfill customer orders.”

Prior to its implementation of i2 solutions, Clarks’ employees were operating in a departmental approach, which resulted in inconsistent processes.

“We were very much a series of silos using different languages, and the passage of data between these silos was not very uniform, not very timely, and not always very accurate,” Scheerer said.

Implementing i2 solutions enabled Clarks to take a more integrated approach from demand planning processes to fulfilling customer orders.

“Now, Clarks looks at the supply chain as a continuum,” Scheerer said. “Everyone is using the same basis of data, the same language, the same terms, and there is a seamless flow from the beginning of the process all the way through to the end.”

Clarks’ Results

With i2 solutions, Clarks has been able to achieve its main goal of improving customer service—giving the shoe manufacturer a competitive edge.

“The i2 implementation has allowed us to become more agile,” Scheerer said. “The solutions enable us to quickly react to market pressures, and we can respond to customer needs. That helps Clarks differentiate itself from a lot of its competitors.”

By taking its implementation in incremental stages, Clarks' quickly accomplished its key goal of delivering customer orders at the promise date—and achieved additional results along the way.

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