

# REINVENTING THE FASHION INDUSTRY.

WHY DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IS  
NOW MORE CRITICAL THAN EVER.





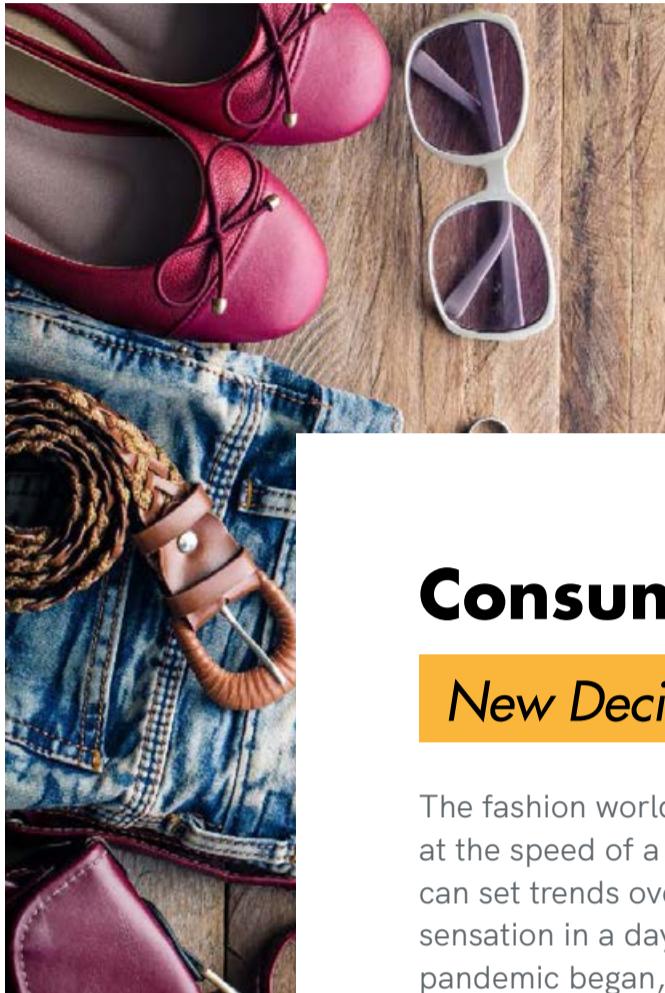
# Welcome

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## **The Inefficiencies of Traditional Fashion Design, Manufacturing and Retail**

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, a majority of retailers were forced to close their doors, causing them to either stop all sales completely or transition to eCommerce. Once physical stores reopened, the experience wasn't the same. Store capacity was limited and some retailers only allowed for curbside pickup. Additionally, with unemployment numbers rising, buying clothes was not a priority for many consumers, leaving many fashion companies with excess stock.

COVID-19 has pulled back the curtain on the inefficiencies in the fashion & retail industry, showing companies they need to rethink and restructure their processes. The pandemic has shown that fashion companies need to improve their eCommerce experience, stop overproducing, and improve their ability to quickly adapt to new challenges.



"With a 10% savings in material utilization and 75% time savings for faster manufacturing productivity, embracing technology is a no-brainer."

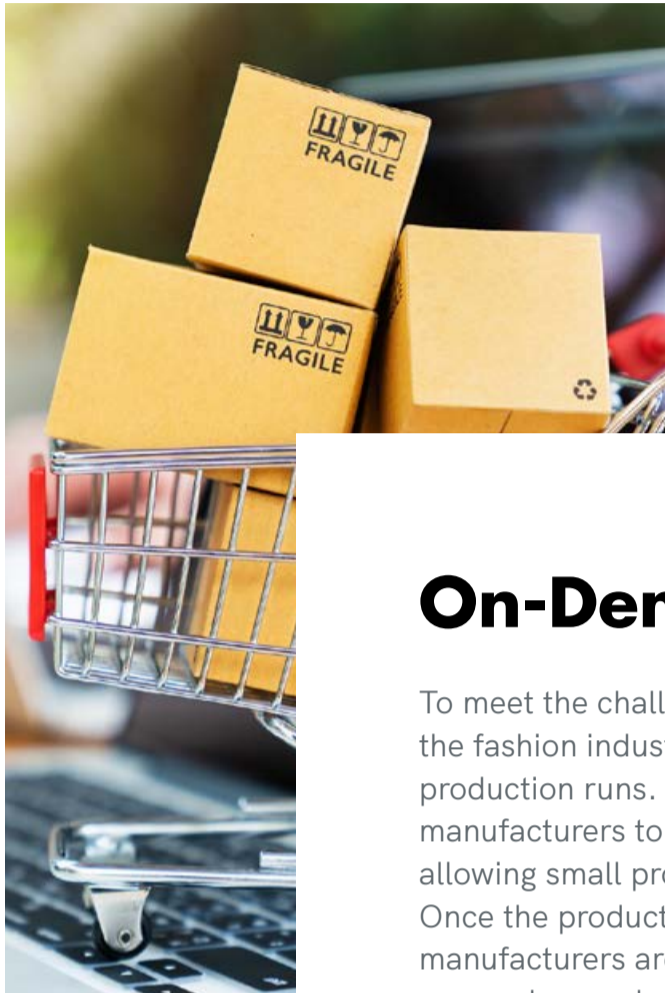
**Darren Beaman**  
Senior Director of Technical Design and  
Production Director, Adrian Jules Ltd.

## Consumers are Making New Decisions

The fashion world has become a fickle place moving at the speed of a click on the internet. Social media can set trends overnight or make a single product a sensation in a day. For example, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, there was a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE). Many fashion companies were called on to help produce PPE and needed to quickly transition their supply chains.

Additionally, social media has changed the way the fashion industry functions. A fashion trend lasts only as long as consumers pay attention. Given the short attention span of the modern consumer, the fashion industry must monitor trends carefully. What was a fashion hit last week, might not warrant ramping up production of that garment, because the trend might be short-lived.

The consumer dynamic has also changed. Millennials don't like to buy things, but they like to have experiences. To the extent that a garment provides an experience, or the illusion of an experience, sales can be made. The process of selecting colors, sizes, materials, and designs creates a buying experience. They want these options because when they shop, they want something that fits with their personality, perfectly fits their shape and body, and is reasonably priced. Millennial customers truly want it all. They are not willing to wait for production and not willing to pay more for custom elements. In addition, more and more millennials are spending their money on brands that ensure environmentally sound production practices.



"Gerber Technology's solutions are very integral to General Sportwear and our ability to execute down to the finest levels."

**Jeff Rosenstock**  
President of General Sportwear

## On-Demand Options

To meet the challenges of the ever-changing consumer, the fashion industry has moved to "on-demand" production runs. On-demand production allows manufacturers to quickly respond to trend changes by allowing small production runs for a particular garment. Once the product is sold out, it's done. As a result, manufacturers aren't saddled with large quantities of unpopular products. It also allows manufacturers' brands to change design collections as fast as they want too.

In some cases, you have new collections coming out nearly every week. Further complicating the industry, consumers aren't willing to pay extra for these products. The fashion industry is also adapting to the lack of brand loyalty.

Brand loyalty is almost an extinct thing. In the past, a brand could drive and hold a trend. Some consumers might try to be loyal because they know a particular brand fits them very well, but today, competition is abundant. A small number of fashion houses produce their products in-house, but most outsource production. With the ability to do small on-demand production runs, even small fashion designers can compete in this space, but it requires using advanced manufacturing techniques and effective use of social marketing.



## Digitalization is

### *The Answer*

One option in automation is digitalization. To start, an initial design is rendered in Adobe®, then connected to PLM to manage the collections. That design is then integrated to CAD to create a 2D pattern and simulate a 3D rendering of the garment. This stage allows you to validate the perfect fit.

Once the fit is perfected, you can move on to add patterns, motifs or personalized graphics then automatically grade your patterns. At this stage your pattern production is ready! Data is then passed on to any digital printer and cut by automatically recognizing the contours of your pattern pieces. To ensure efficiency,

save money and limit waste, powerful algorithms utilize markers that ensure fabric consumption is optimized.

Digitalization allows your data to seamlessly move from one stage to another. This is how manufacturers meet the challenges to produce fabric more efficiently and reduce the cost. If you don't waste time, if you save materials and you optimize the usage of your materials, in the end you'll save costs as well. Leonard Marano, Chief Commercial Officer at Gerber Technology commented, "Recently we showcased Gerber's textile workflow and automated cutting in a variety of micro-factories with Kornit, EFI® Reggiani and Mimaki™."



## Material Printing,

### *Stock and Waste*

Another aspect of digitalization is the printing of patterns on materials. Schinlever states, that the “strong growth trend in digital textile printing can be accelerated by Gerber’s integrated eco-system of software and equipments, delivering value through connectivity and achieving Industry 4.0 expectations from concept to finished product.”

As was previously mentioned, historically, manufacturers needed to have warehouses for the materials used to make garments, this included the fabric. In the past, that meant having a lot of fabric in stock because they didn’t know what the consumer was going to order. Further, a customer might have selected a pattern for which you might not have had enough material. Digital printing has proven to be a game changer for this issue because it allows the printing of a particular pattern on demand. This eliminates any stock management issues and it saves money by reducing waste. The pattern can be printed for any design and offer infinite personalization and measurement possibilities.

Really at the core of the transformation occurring in garment manufacturing is the rise of the micro-factory. This is an end-to-end solution that enables the ability to seamlessly pass data throughout the supply chain, taking you from design to print to cut in no time. With every piece of the supply chain in one place, you can keep your entire production process in-house, saving time and money.

Switching to a micro-factory can drastically reduce development times. The streamlined workflow seamlessly passes data from one part of the supply chain to the next, eliminating errors and the need for manual entry. The implementation of a micro-factory facilitates on-demand manufacturing. With the ability to produce products quickly, manufacturers can begin the production process after the order has been received and paid for, allowing for more customization and personalization.



## How Gerber Helps

Gerber's on-demand manufacturing, mass production, and digital product development applications integrate data from design to finished product, which includes powerful software solutions, including YuniquePLM® and the AccuMark® Platform, as well as advanced hardware solutions, such as the GERBERcutter® Z1 with ContourVision™ and the next generation multi-ply cutters that will make up the industry of the future, to create perfectly cut parts that can be sewn together accurately. Gerber's IoT-enabled systems are also able to seamlessly integrate with a variety of digital printing technologies.

Digitalization is the key to producing high-quality products while still making them affordable to the consumer. And most importantly, the manufacturers don't have to heavily discount their products..

This Industry 4.0 enabled, automated scan-to-cut system allows manufacturers to scan custom textiles, generate cut files automatically, and cut directly from white textile rolls.

## In Conclusion

Industry 4.0 principles are empowering purchase activated, on-demand manufacturing. Brands and manufacturers are able to respond to demand versus producing to supply. The approach eliminates costly inventory and re-defines just-in-time manufacturing, so production adjusts as demands fluctuate — allowing products to be produced more efficiently and sold at full retail price without heavy discounting while meeting demand for a more sustainable production practice.

Brands, retailers, and manufacturers who rely on a micro-factory for production are able to digitally develop products allowing them to easily keep up with the challenging consumer demands. Those who embrace digitalization are significantly more successful than those who are still relying on traditional production processes.

The fashion industry has become hyper-competitive. In the past, manufacturers with the cheapest labor controlled large markets. But with shifts in consumer expectations, the need for the industry to evolve has set in motion rapid advancements. The ability to digitally represent a product and pass that information onto tools that reduce waste, locally print patterns, and then perform the required cutting have leveled the advantage cheap labor once provided. The increase in productivity afforded by these machines and software suites is actually making micro-factories more competitive than traditional methods allowing for manufacturing to take place regardless of geographic costs. The micro-factory concept will continue to push innovation into the industry, or more accurately, the consumer will require the micro-factory concept to continue advances in productivity while controlling costs. In the end, the consumer drives the parameters that brands and manufacturers must live with, and Gerber Technology is offering the software and equipment that allows the factory of the future to be available today.



*For over 50 years, Gerber Technology has offered a complete line of computer-aided automation solutions to manufacturers and retailers of apparel, technical textiles, footwear, home textiles and fashion accessories helping save time, reduce costs and accelerate product design, development and production. Our systems help you ensure product quality, improve profitability, meet customer demands and capture consumer loyalty.*

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**+1.860.871.8082**  
**USA: 1.800.826.3243**  
**[www.gerbertechnology.com](http://www.gerbertechnology.com)**

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