



# Christopher Lena: Finding the Right Fit and Room for Growth with SAP® Software

CHRISTOPHER LENA  
Cotton Comfort

Partner



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**Company**

Christopher Lena Shirt Co.

**Industry**

Consumer products – apparel

**Products and Services**

High-quality dress shirts for men

**Web Site**[www.christopherlena.com](http://www.christopherlena.com)**SAP® Solutions**

SAP® Business One OnDemand solution with the Fashion One add-on solution by Softengine Inc.

**Partner**

Softengine Inc.

[www.softengineusa.com](http://www.softengineusa.com)

Choosing what to wear is a lot like choosing the right software. Both need to offer the correct style, size, and value. For the Christopher Lena Shirt Co., known for its bold styles and unsurpassed quality, it was time for a makeover. Its legacy software was too constrictive and didn't support the company's long-term vision. In the SAP® Business One OnDemand solution, Christopher Lena found a much better fit – one that provides **better visibility, efficiency, and control**.

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# Making the world a more beautiful and well-dressed place

Since 1982 the Christopher Lena Shirt Co. has prided itself on creating high-quality dress shirts for men. The company produces approximately 500,000 shirts annually in various brands, colors, and styles. Its popular Modena and Christopher Lena Classic Comfort shirt lines offer impeccable construction and attention to detail in a range of classic and modern styles.

Based in Carson, California, the company's 12 full-time, in-house employees collaborate with suppliers and overseas manufacturers to bring apparel to market. The shirts are designed by Christopher Lena's on-staff apparel designers at company headquarters, where all operational and supply chain processes are managed as well. These processes include sales, marketing, order processing, customer service, accounts receivables, and warehouse logistics and fulfillment.

By delivering high-quality, ultrastylish shirts at reasonable costs, Christopher Lena has built a reputation that drives loyalty among fashion- and price-conscious consumers. The shirts are sold by Men's Warehouse and numerous independent specialty men's stores throughout the United States. They are available online as well



## 500,000

Dress shirts manufactured annually

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# Dressing the IT landscape for success

While Christopher Lena's shirt designs are "fashion forward," the legacy software the company had deployed was holding it back from expanding its customer base. "We were using an industry solution that was adequate but it couldn't scale going forward," says Leonard Kang, operations manager at Christopher Lena.

The software supported order entry and production processes, but accounting and order tracking had to be handled in separate software solutions such as QuickBooks and Microsoft Excel. For a company in the apparel industry that must always think ahead – to the next season, the newest trend, and the latest styles – this inefficient way of working was a liability.

"We had no visibility into our sales history because the software didn't retain our original sales orders," Kang says. "We could generate a PDF printout, but we couldn't export the data into Excel to analyze it. This was a huge functionality problem."

Support was also an issue. "It was really hard to run different reports and analyze individual dimensions of data. When we contacted the software vendor about our need, they were unresponsive," Kang explains.

In addition to these concerns, the company was not confident that the software would support e-commerce, which was important for further expansion. "We could see the writing on the wall. It was time to move on," adds Kang.

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"The next logical step for us was to adopt an integrated software solution that was suited for a business of our size and for our industry."

Leonard Kang, Operations Manager, Christopher Lena Shirt Co.



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# Finding a perfect fit with minimal alterations

Christopher Lena was on a path to update its technology to help it grow, but not just for growth's sake. It wanted to improve all areas of operations. "We were looking for an integrated software solution that met our industry-specific needs while supporting best practices-based business processes," Kang says. "We wanted a solution that was adaptable to changing business conditions and our evolving technology needs, including mobile connectivity and e-commerce capabilities."

The company considered several enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions including nVision, NetSuite, and the SAP Business One OnDemand solution, an on-demand version of the SAP Business One application. After careful consideration, Christopher Lena selected SAP Business One

OnDemand with the Fashion One add-on solution by Softengine Inc.

"SAP Business One OnDemand was the right size for our business and provided a platform for growth. Plus, we liked that it was available as a hosted software package," Kang says. "The Fashion One add-on provided the functionality we needed without a lot of customization."

Choosing an implementation partner was nearly as important to Christopher Lena as the software it selected. "We decided to find a partner we could put our trust in," Kang explains. "Softengine is very experienced and systemized in its approach. We were very confident we'd made the right choice."

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"Small businesses might be intimidated by SAP software. What they don't realize is that SAP offers solutions designed specifically for small to midsize companies like ours."

Leonard Kang, Operations Manager, Christopher Lena Shirt Co.



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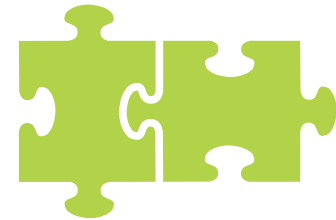


# Leveraging hosted software and an industry template

Christopher Lena was up and running with its new software within three months. The project began with an on-site visit by a Softengine business analyst. “We walked the consultant through all of the business processes and reports we needed,” Kang says. “We also explained our size, color, and style matrix and the logic behind our stock-keeping units.”

Next, Softengine consolidated, cleansed, and migrated the shirt manufacturer’s data into the hosted software environment. Softengine then tested the software to make sure all of the functionality was working properly with Christopher Lena’s data. By using the Fashion One add-on solution, which was built for the apparel industry, very little customization was required, minimizing project cost, time, and risk.

For training, Christopher Lena made use of the many e-learning components available for SAP Business One OnDemand. In addition, it adopted a train-the-trainer approach to enable change management.



## 3 months

To implement the software

“The consultant reviewed all aspects of operating the software. From there I worked with each employee to demonstrate how to use it,” Kang explains.

For the launch, the Softengine consultant stayed on-site for one week to help troubleshoot any issues and answer questions. “Once the SAP software was live, we discontinued use of the vertical industry solution immediately,” Kang says.

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# Operating with better insight and control

With SAP Business One OnDemand, Christopher Lena now has a single software solution to support all critical business processes. The Fashion One add-on integrates with the SAP software to help the company manage finished inventory, raw materials, cutting tickets, allocations, accounts payable and receivable, and bar codes. Flexible definitions of the matrix make SKU generation intuitive, powerful, and automated.

Business operations are more tightly linked and efficient. "Having integrated customer relationship

management practices gives us much better insight and control over receivables," Kang explains. "Now our accounts receivables people can tag invoices that are overdue so we can hold orders until we're paid."

The company is also taking advantage of better data analysis and reporting functionality. "We can run reports to see our average profit margins. With this insight, we can price items more aggressively to turn our inventory faster. We didn't have that visibility before to validate our decisions," Kang adds.

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"We can use a laptop to log in to our environment from anywhere to get real-time access to inventory and receivables. If we're at a trade show, we can run credit checks on potential new customers to reduce exposure to financial risk."

Leonard Kang, Operations Manager, Christopher Lena Shirt Co.



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# Realizing benefits across the entire value chain

With SAP Business One OnDemand, Christopher Lena has been able to improve operations and increase insight with minimal cost and complexity. The software increases Christopher Lena's business agility so it can introduce new styles more quickly. "We're offering better styles and more aggressive pricing, so our customers are happier," Kang says.

And that has translated into increased sales, in spite of a down economy and Christopher Lena's shrinking target market. Kang explains, "We've had six percent growth since last year, which is particularly remarkable as our target audience of baby boomers is growing out of the need for dress wear."

For this industry segment, Christopher Lena needs to maintain low overhead. By leveraging an on-

demand solution and Softengine's expertise, Christopher Lena has dramatically accelerated its time to value. "We didn't need to hire experienced IT staff to manage the software or invest in the underlying IT infrastructure," Kang says. "Softengine automatically maintains and updates the software, so we always have current technology."

Security is not a concern either. "Security is higher now than it was when we operated an on-premise solution," Kang says. The software is hosted in highly secure data centers that feature an array of physical and network safeguards to protect sensitive business data. With no hardware to manage or software to maintain, Christopher Lena can focus on its business, not IT.

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"With SAP software and Fashion One, we have better insight across our entire value chain to support business decisions, improve our margins, and expand our customer base."

Leonard Kang, Operations Manager, Christopher Lena Shirt Co.





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## Looking ahead to a bright future

Now that Christopher Lena's software infrastructure matches the fashion-forward caliber of the shirts it designs, a world of opportunity awaits. "We finally have the support we need to reach new markets and grow our customer base," Kang says.

Going forward, Christopher Lena will focus on tightening production management and the tracking of raw materials, enabling incremental improvements to its operations. "Before, we were using an industry solution that was sufficient," Kang says. "But now we have a first-rate software foundation that allows us to take our business to a whole new level."



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