

Conducting a Legacy Technology Assessment for a Footwear and Apparel Retailer

INDUSTRY



Retail

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES



Footwear & Apparel

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION STORY & BUSINESS CHALLENGE

This client is a multi-billion-dollar footwear and apparel retailer that has experienced rapid growth over the past decade. While its existing technology has largely met business needs, it's built on aging, custom-built systems that have introduced increasing operational complexity. These constraints have driven a reliance on manual processes and workarounds, limiting efficiency and scalability as the business continues to expand.

Compounding this challenge, the team responsible for supporting these systems is nearing retirement, risking knowledge loss and reducing the ability to maintain or enhance the platform effectively. This combination of legacy custom technology and potential capability gaps raises concerns around the organization's long-term ability to maintain these aging systems and implement new functionality.

To address these challenges, the client engaged Clarkston to assess and document these custom systems supporting finance, supply chain, allocations, and global trade. Once the current state was understood, Clarkston mapped these bespoke tools to industry-leading replacements and developed a roadmap to implement these new tools. The result was a plan to transition from legacy platforms to a more scalable, sustainable architecture.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- Establish a comprehensive understanding of two highly customized legacy platforms supporting global operations by documenting current-state capabilities, processes, and integrations
- Identify operational risks associated with aging, homegrown systems, including heavy reliance on manual processes and institutional knowledge concentrated within a small team
- Define a scalable future-state technology vision aligned with enterprise standards and strategic platforms, while evaluating how current business capabilities can transition to future-state systems and strategic vendors to ensure long-term sustainability and reduced architectural complexity
- Develop a phased, capability-driven roadmap to retire legacy systems while minimizing business disruption and aligning with ongoing enterprise initiatives
- Enable executive decision-making by providing clear recommendations and sequencing considerations to minimize risk in this large-scale project

RESOLUTION

- Led a structured discovery effort, including documentation review and system demos, to capture end-to-end business capabilities and system interactions across legacy platforms supporting supply chain, finance, allocations, and global trade
- Developed detailed current-state capability maps for core domains such as product data, order management, inventory, global trade data, and financial processes, highlighting dependencies and pain points across systems
- Reviewed integration patterns and data flow across the enterprise landscape to identify opportunities to reduce manual effort
- Conducted a vendor fit and capability alignment assessment across strategic enterprise platforms (e.g., *ERP, planning, and supply chain solutions*) to determine how future-state systems could absorb legacy functionality
- Defined a future-state enterprise architecture, aligning capabilities to target platforms and identifying possible gaps and implementation considerations
- Developed a phased, capability-led roadmap outlining sequencing, dependencies, and geographic rollout strategy to enable a controlled transition from legacy systems to modern platforms

KEY BENEFITS

- Delivered a unified, enterprise-wide view of legacy system functionality and dependencies, increasing transparency across IT stakeholders
- Reduced organizational risk by confirming and quantifying dependencies on aging systems and at-risk knowledge areas, enabling proactive planning for system retirement and knowledge transfer
- Provided a clear, actionable roadmap to modernize core enterprise systems, balancing speed of transformation with operational continuity and risk mitigation
- Aligned on a future-state architecture leveraging existing strategic technology investments, reducing the need for net-new platforms and minimizing long-term cost and complexity
- Identified opportunities to simplify workflows and improve data consistency across order processing, inventory management, global trade management, and financial reporting
- Equipped executive leadership with the insights and decision framework needed to move from discovery into implementation planning with confidence

KPIs

- Documented 23 distinct capabilities fulfilled by 2 aging enterprise systems
- Evaluated 3 separate existing software partners for the ability to support those capabilities
- Defined a phased roadmap, minimizing risks associated with this significant change