

Technology & Business Insight – From Concept to Consumer

Apparel™

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2014 TOP INNOVATORS

From social engagement to capsule collections to internal collaboration: a unified centralized platform makes everything better at AEROPOSTALE.

Find out how this teen specialty retailer and Apparel's other Innovator Award Winners keep customers coming back.

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**Thought Leadership Report:
Business Intelligence and
the Responsive Retailer**

Halston

New York, N.Y. | www.halston.com

NOMINATED BY: RLM | www.ronlynn.com



Halston has come a long way since its Studio 54 heyday when founder Roy Halston Frowick's fashions were de rigueur in 1970s discotheques. In 2013 the brand began opening a bevy of brick-and-mortar stores, including a flagship on Madison Avenue, with plans to expand its physical presence.

Despite its move back into retail, Halston still looks to wholesale accounts for a significant share of its revenue. To that end, the company became the first apparel brand to integrate RLM's ERP software with the RepSpark selling tool, which it used to manage all non-EDI-based wholesale orders. Interfaces between RLM and RepSpark ensure that customer master data as well as images are shared between the two systems.

Like many apparel brands, Halston operates on a wholly outsourced model for all of its technology systems. RLM ERP enables a consistent data model across different applications, and as Halston transitioned onto the RLM platform by the end of 2011, the company wanted to take a long-term view of how data is structured.

"Our sales executives are able to work with accounts at specialty stores that may or may not come to market, as well as international distributors," says Bryan Timm, COO, Halston. Describing RepSpark as more of an auxiliary than primary tool, Timm notes that the software aids in driving incremental sales orders. For example, RepSpark enables Halston's dozen sales reps to provide recommendations, showing its 250 specialty wholesale account

holders which products have been selling well so far and suggesting a replenishment order.

"RepSpark really helps to facilitate the discussion of the account," Timm says. "It's easy to see different shots of each style, and if someone misses an appointment, the account exec can pre-lay out an order for the client, and say 'Here are my recommendations, what do you think?'"

RepSpark customer orders flow into RLM ERP where they are reviewed in a "relatively seamless process" before final approval. This ensures that typos are caught and eliminated so that 1,000 units aren't ordered when 20 were intended, Timm explains.

While integrating RepSpark with RLM ERP was fairly straightforward, says Timm, Halston encountered minor challenges along the way. For example, Timm's team had to engineer some tweaks to ensure that when a product style is no longer available in RLM, it also doesn't show up as a style option in RepSpark.

After years of integrating systems across the enterprise, Halston expects to reap the benefits of all of its hard work in 2014. "This year focus is on taking advantage of that integration and determining how we can enhance processes to drive efficiency and make better decisions," says Timm.

— Jessica Binns

U.S. Special Operations Command

MacDill Air Force Base, Florida | www.socom.mil

NOMINATED BY: Polartec® | www.polartec.com

The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) must operate under conditions that are much different from a general outdoor enthusiast. Unlike a skier or mountain climber who is typically engaged in those activities for enjoyment, and can progress at his or her leisure, the U.S. Special Ops are involved in time-sensitive and often dangerous missions. As such, they cannot stop and put on layers, or shed layers, due to changes in the weather, especially as they are usually wearing body armor and load-carrying harnesses, and do not have the luxury of stopping to take them on or off. It's a scenario that calls for a highly versatile garment that can adapt to chang-

ing external and internal conditions.

"U.S. Special Operations is always looking for game changing technologies to enhance the battlefield efficacy of our operators who have to be able to work effectively in any global environmental extreme," says a spokesperson for USSOCOM.

One of the ongoing challenges in creating garments for cold-weather conditions is developing materials that are breathable yet also moisture-resistant. Typical puffy garments that require "down-proof" or high-density woven layers create a vapor barrier that, although it works well in static conditions, traps moisture inside the garment during even minimal activity.



Polartec® Alpha® insulation developed with USSOCOM was tested by U.S. Special Ops under the harshest of conditions — including jumping in a freezing lake in Kodiak, Alaska.

Typically USSOCOM leverages commercially off-the-shelf technology, but in seeking a solution to this problem it approached Polartec, working with the