

Kurabo International: Bridging the Generation Gap with Lectra

Challenge

Founded in 1973, Kurabo International is one of Japan's major textile trading firm, generating \$202.4m in annual revenue in 2016 and producing 25 million pieces a year for clients like lingerie brand Wacoal, childrenswear brand Miki House, and its own in-house brands. While the company operates plants in countries such as China, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Vietnam, it has two domestic factories in Murakami and Takeda that specialize in manufacturing higher-quality items.

Because producing in Japan is more expensive than overseas, where its competitors are located, Kurabo needed to lower its costs to keep its pricing competitive, without sacrificing profits or quality. In addition, many long-time employees were retiring and taking their knowledge with them, leaving a gap in the company's skilled workforce and a decrease in efficiency, productivity and cutting quality.

Markets

Uniforms, Casualwear, Childrenswear, Innerwear, Sleepwear

Location

Murakami and Takeda, Japan

Solution

Kurabo began using Lectra's patternmaking software Modaris to streamline their product development process. The solution helped the company speed up the process by allowing them to check material quality and fit faster and more accurately. With Modaris, Kurabo was also able to deliver to market faster at a lower cost because fewer prototypes were needed for each new product.

Kurabo then tackled the problem of their aging workforce by adding Lectra's marker-making software Diamino and its Vector fashion cutting machines to its cutting room. Diamino reduced fabric waste, while the cutters helped offset the loss of experienced workers. The Vectors' easy handling required fewer people (and skills) to manage the cutting process, while their speed and accurate zero-buffer cutting boosted productivity by more than 10%.

Lectra solutions

Diamino®
Vector®

Modaris®
Expert

The Kurabo Group is a powerhouse in Japan's textile industry. Its supply chain extends from textile production to finished garment and the group's manufacturing arm, Kurabo International, produces clothing for high-profile brands like Wacoal and Miki House, as well as uniforms and casualwear for its in-house brands. "Having earned the trust of our customers, we are committed to providing quality they can depend on," says president and CEO Atsuhiko Nishizawa. "Our company mission is to create innovative products that add value to our customers' lives. Lectra technology helps make that possible."

Home-field advantage

Kurabo International owns and operates plants in China, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Vietnam, but the company processes its most complex orders in Japan, where employees have the skills and experience required to handle delicate fabrics, intricate details, complicated patterns, and small-batch orders. "Manufacturing domestically is getting increasingly expensive, but keeping production going in Murakami and Takeda is important to us because it gives us more control over product quality," explains Hiroyasu Kamohara, Chairman of the Board for Kurabo International. Unwilling to give up their domestic production sites, Kurabo looked for other ways to lower costs. The company began using Lectra's patternmaking software Modaris to streamline product development. "With Modaris, we can check color and fit quickly and more accurately. We save on time, labor and materials because we now need 20% less samples than before," Kamohara explains. "Lectra has helped make our product-development process faster and more precise, so that we are still cost-efficient, despite the fact that our production costs are higher than if we were manufacturing overseas."

Generation gap

Kurabo's Takeda factory was primarily staffed with highly skilled employees who did their cutting by hand, but many were reaching retirement age, with nobody to replace them. As their numbers dwindled, the yield rate for small-volume orders dropped, and cutting efficiency decreased. Kurabo decided to offset the skills gap left by its aging workforce with a CAM solution. Pleased with the results they had achieved with Modaris, they added Lectra's marker-making software Diamino and Vector

fashion cutting machines to their operation. Diamino's optimized markers, coupled with the Vectors' speed and precise, zero-buffer cutting, improved quality and reduced fabric waste. With Vector's easy handling, fewer people were needed to manage the cutting process. "We can now manage cutting process with 20% less manpower than before," attests Kamohara.

Solutions that take you from A to Z

Thanks to the time, material and labor costs that Kurabo International was able to save with Lectra's software and hardware solutions, the future of its production sites in Japan is secure. The product-development and production processes in Takeda and Murakami are smoother than ever, and overall efficiency at the factories has increased by more than 10%. Over the course of their 20-year relationship with Lectra, the Japanese group has become one of the tech company's most loyal customers. Kurabo knows from past experience that it can count on Lectra's dedication and service to see it through any challenges that may arise in the future. "We trust Lectra to deliver high-quality technology solutions that will help us maintain the level of efficiency, quality standards and flexibility in production that is crucial to our survival in today's marketplace," affirms Kamohara. "We couldn't ask for anything more in a technology partner."



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Atsuhiko Nishizawa
President and CEO, Kurabo International



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About Lectra

For forward-looking companies that breathe life into our wardrobes, car interiors, furniture and more, Lectra is committed to crafting the premium technologies that facilitate the digital transformation of their industry. Lectra's offer empowers brands and manufacturers from design to production, providing them with the market respect and peace of mind they deserve. Supporting the fashion and apparel industry, Lectra offers PLM and CAD software, cutting room solutions and expert services to create, develop and produce garments, accessories and footwear. Founded in 1973, today Lectra has 32 subsidiaries across the globe, serving customers in over 100 countries. With nearly 1,700 employees, Lectra reported revenues of \$313 million in 2017. Lectra is listed on Euronext (LSS).

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