

## Omnia Leather finds the recipe for product personalization success with Versalis

Omnia saves 3% on hide yields, speeds up cutting and improves quality with Versalis.



**O**mnia Leather was born from the ambitious imagination of two Italian immigrants, Salvatore Zolferino and Emilio Nastri. After the young men arrived in the United States, they began working in the upholstery business. After 30 years in the business, they decided they wanted to create their own American dream. So, they founded Omnia. Through partnerships with Italian tanneries, Salvatore and Emilio were able to provide a service that was lacking on the American market: quality European-style leather furniture at an affordable price.

However, sourcing pre-cut leather from European suppliers did not allow Omnia to keep up with changes in demand on the American market.

*"As the business developed, we found that consumers had greater demand for larger sofas, more choices of configurations and leathers. So we decided to do all the manufacturing in the US,"* explains Peter Zolferino, President of Omnia.

From its origins as a cut-and-sew operation offering six styles and employing one worker, Omnia has grown to become a full-line manufacturer with a 250-person team offering more than 300 styles to its growing customer base.

## What sets Omnia apart

As furniture becomes more trend-based, keeping abreast of which styles are in, out or on the rise is essential. Omnia credits its strong relationship with its retailers as the key component to its growth. “Our retailers are the heart of our business. They are the first touch to the customer and they let us know what the trend in the marketplace is. It allows us to make these adjustments to stay up with the fashion trends and demands of the consumer,” Peter states.

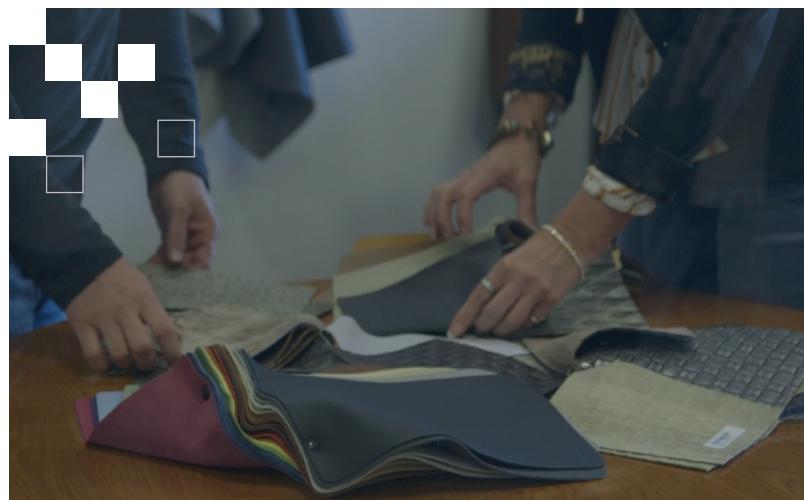
And what the consumer demands is the ability to co-create the perfect piece of furniture for their lifestyle as well as their home style. ‘Personalizing comfort’ is not just an empty tagline for Omnia; it is a true brand promise. Customers can choose from traditional, transitional and contemporary styles, stationary and motion furniture, with a choice of hundreds of leathers and fabrics, and a multitude of sofa configurations and sizes.

Manufacturing its products in the United States allows Omnia to not only give the customers the breadth of options they demand but also deliver it quickly. “Building an Omnia product in the United States is important to us so we can put out a quality product, buy quality American raw materials, and deliver the multitude of configurations and leathers in a timely manner,” says Peter.

It also allows Omnia to uphold their commitment to sustainable production practices. “We are founding members of the Sustainable Furniture Council. The trend in the marketplace is consumers want a sustainable product. We work closely with our suppliers to make sure that we are getting a quality raw material that fits the parameters of sustainability,” he continues.

## Need for Change

Switching from a cut-and-sew operation to full-line manufacturing required some trial and error. When Omnia initially started cutting leather in-house, they used a manual pen-and-scissors method. Teams of two would trace patterns on hides with a marking pen, and then cut each piece with scissors. This process proved laborious and costly due to the need to employ two people per team just to cut and mark.



To speed up the process, the company decided to bypass the marking step and simply place patterns on the hide and cut around them with a knife. This accelerated the process a bit but still presented multiple challenges. Although cutting with a knife was relatively faster than marking and cutting process, it still didn't allow Omnia to keep up with its demanding production schedule. As a result, employees had to work overtime. In addition, for a company that provides so many different styles and configurations, the number of patterns was unwieldy. “With cardboard patterns, we always missed pieces; we made mistakes,” says Gregory Rodriguez, Omnia’s cutting room supervisor.

As pressure on the leather department increased, Omnia knew they needed a change.





## A partner of choice

Omnia and Lectra's relationship dates back to 2004. "We have been using Lectra cutting solutions for about 15 years and value the quality and service," says Peter. So, when they began their search for a new leather cutting process, Lectra was already on the top of the list, and it quickly became the only name on the list.

When comparing Versalis to other leather cutting solutions on the market, it stood out from the rest for multiple reasons. "We chose Versalis over other competitors because of its efficiency and speed. The other machines we looked at in the marketplace required handling and marking individual hides. It was a slow cutting process, much more material handling and labor-intensive than Versalis," explains Peter. He continues: "And the computer software that they offered allowed the nesting to be done much quicker and ultimately gave us a better yield on the hides."

The Omnia team traveled to Lectra's International Advanced Technology Center in Cestas, France for a demonstration of Versalis and the benefits they could expect to gain. The result of the tests convinced Omnia that with Versalis they could expect to improve hide yield by three percent and overall production capacity by four percent. Omnia invested in its first Versalis leather cutting solution in 2015, and followed up with its second three years later.

## Gains across the board

Omnia's new leather-cutting process, which includes using Formaris, Lectra's digital pattern-making software, has allowed them to reach their hide yield, productivity and quality objectives.

Digital connection between Formaris and Versalis streamlines the process and facilitates the creation of the multitude of styles and configuration Omnia produces. "When you offer 40 different configurations, as we do with 80% of our styles, there's a lot of patterns. With Formaris, we digitize each style, each configuration into the computer. We then implement that into the Versalis cutting machine."

The combination of Versalis' automated nesting software and its highly precise cutting ensures that Omnia gets the most value from each hide. "When we cut by hand, either marking or cutting, our yield was around 70 or 71 percent. With Versalis, we consistently reach 75 percent," says Gregory.

Quality and productivity concerns have also been eliminated. "Versalis has allowed us to triple the production time with a smaller team of three people. It also allows us to have less mistakes than you would with a hand cutter because the patterns are in the system; you always get a left and a right cut. With each pattern having its own zone, the nesting from Lectra allows us to get the best yield possible out of a hide," Peter states.

Versalis also helps Omnia enhance its already superior customer service. A Versalis cutting room helps Omnia achieve the flexibility needed to respond quickly and efficiently to last-minute orders and changes. With Versalis' integrated, digitalized process, Omnia can maintain the deadlines necessary to meet their customer's expectations.

The Versalis' integrated software suite and productivity analysis reports have become essential elements in the company's continuous improvement initiatives, allowing them to monitor hide consumption, evaluate system performance and compare productivity with set objectives.

"With Versalis, we can oversee our production much easier. Comparing individual machines, individual teams, comparing yields. It also allows us to compare tanneries.

We do buy like products from some of our tanneries and we can determine which are sending us a better raw material. It allows us to track our suppliers and make them deliver us a quality product," says Peter.

Overall, Versalis has been a welcome addition to Omnia. "It has saved us many labor dollars because it's less material handling of leather hides, heavy patterns. It also adds a safety feature to the factory. It has been a great asset to Omnia."

## The future of Omnia and Lectra

Lectra's best-in-class technology and unique cutting expertise have helped Omnia achieve its ambitious business objectives. "Lectra has helped our company tremendously over the years. Without Lectra, we would not be able to have the output that we have today, the speed of getting product out in the leather cutting department, and especially not have the leather savings," says Peter.

Peter sees Lectra as a key component of his company's growth strategy: "The future of Lectra and Omnia, I see as very strong. As the demands of leather builds on Omnia as we grow our business, we will add another machine and continue to upgrade our machine with the software that Lectra offers."

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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, manufacturers and retailers, from design to production, providing them with the market respect and peace of mind they deserve. Supporting the furniture industry, Lectra offers CAD software, cutting room solutions and expert services dedicated to upholstered models. Founded in 1973, today Lectra has 32 subsidiaries across the globe, serving customers in over 100 countries. With more than 1,700 employees, Lectra reported revenues of \$333 million in 2018. Lectra is listed on Euronext (LSS).

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