



CUSTOMER STORY

LĒCTRA®

# Zolano offers the best of both worlds with Lectra's digital leather-cutting solution for **Industry 4.0**

Premium sofa brand and manufacturer successfully combines fine Italian leather upholstery and Malaysian production know-how using Lectra's latest Versalis



## Challenge

Always striving for excellence, Zolano sought to offer consumers a wider array of choices among leather types, designs and colors for personalization without sacrificing profitability and quality. However, their cutting machines could only scan certain colors and manage eight to twelve hides per hour. Moreover, with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, Zolano, like the rest of the furniture industry, had to overcome additional obstacles, namely rising material costs, limited manpower due to border restrictions, and new social distancing rules in production sites. To cushion themselves against these shocks, they were looking for ways to automate more processes, and bring leather waste and operating costs to a minimum.

## Lectra's response

Lectra proposed its latest version of Versalis, a digital leather-cutting solution that has an all-in-one cutting line starting from hide digitalization to offloading. Developed based on Industry 4.0 principles, this technology can scan an unlimited range of leather types and cut bigger volumes of hides faster thanks to a wide range of blades, drills and needles for thick, soft leather and complex shapes. It comes with an automatic nesting software that can forecast leather consumption and increase material savings by 10% more than when it is done manually.

## Results

Thanks to Versalis, Zolano is now able to scan an unlimited range of leather types, including bright-colored hides of rarer textures, and detect and eliminate their imperfections. As a result, they can cut more leather and create a wider variety of products for their customers. With its single-head cutter, this technology enables Zolano to cut 25% more hides per hour than before. The solution's nesting capabilities have been helping the company increase material savings by 1.1% per year, which surpasses its annual target of 1% and translates into cost savings of \$61,000-\$121,000 depending on the leather type.

## Zolano's steadfast commitment to quality

Founded in 1978 by Mr. Yap Hoo, Zolano is a high-end sofa brand and an original design and equipment manufacturer based in Malaysia. With more than 20 retailers in Malaysia and a flagship store in the People's Republic of China, the company exports to many countries in the UAE, USA, Middle East, Asia Pacific region, and Europe. Zolano has made a name for itself by marrying Italian leather craftsmanship and design with Malaysian manufacturing expertise, providing high quality, customizable sofas to customers. The company sources its leather from a reputable Italian tannery, Gruppo Mastrotto, also a Versalis user, and frames its sofas using Pacific Maple timber from Malaysia.

Today, it boasts 300 employees and a production output of 150 seats a day, with a strong customer base in China, Australia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Korea, and Singapore. "Each sofa is a product of extensive R&D, design, production and quality control," says Mr. Yap. To stay competitive and on-trend, the company aimed to offer more — in terms of product range, colors, and designs while maintaining its profit margins and quality. They saw only one way of doing this — by upgrading their leather-cutting technology to increase productivity.





## Meeting new consumer needs and weathering the COVID-19 crisis with Versalis

Zolano has always prided itself for providing its customers with an extensive variety of colored and textured hides. However, this was somehow constrained by their pre-existing cutting machines that could only scan hides of a limited range of colors and textures, and cut eight to twelve pieces per hour. They needed a new digital cutting solution that could help them keep pace with today's consumer needs and trends. The company had already been using

Lectra's fabric-cutting solution, Vector, and was pleased with their experience. When they heard that Lectra was launching a new digital cutting solution that could handle more in terms of leather types, cutting volumes and at the same time, increase hide yield, Zolano jumped at the opportunity to see the solution firsthand at Lectra's headquarters in Cestas, France. They were impressed by its performance and decided to implement it.



The results are staggering. Versalis, with its embedded scanner that can recognize up to five defect qualification grades, is able to analyze hides of all types, sizes and colors in one single pass. The cutting room operators can thus eliminate defects faster and not waste time adjusting and cleaning the scanner as they had to with their previous cutting equipment. This gives Zolano the freedom to work with different leather types and offer more options to their consumers. With Versalis' automated nesting software, they can now analyze their leather consumption, develop nesting and cutting strategies based on leather specifications, and prioritize their cut parts. This enables them to increase both their hide yield and

productivity. "Thanks to Versalis, we have increased material savings by 1.1%. We can now cut up to 13 hides per hour, which is quite a feat, since this represents a 25% increase in throughput for us," attests Mr. Yap. "This cutting solution is also more accurate and makes fewer errors than the previous one."

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has completely redefined the furniture industry. With more people working from home, there has been a renewed interest in buying furniture online. While consumer demand has risen, material costs have increased dramatically as well. Despite today's challenging business environment, Zolano maintains

its razor-sharp focus on quality, while keeping operating costs and leather waste to a minimum. "With supply chains that stretch across the globe, and limited manpower due to border restrictions, this crisis has really highlighted the importance of automation in sofa production for us. In retrospect, we have made the right choice by investing in more advanced technology. Without a doubt in my mind, the future of furniture is digital," Mr. Yap says with conviction.

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**Mr. Yap Hoo,  
Managing Director,  
Zolano**



## **Bigger and bolder ambitions for the future**

Zolano was impressed by Lectra’s commitment to its customers throughout its Versalis journey. “The onboarding phase was relatively easy as Lectra’s team of technical experts was there for us at every step of the way,” says Mr. Yap. The latest Versalis is user-friendly and our operators were given detailed explanations of the solution’s features and functions in the implementation and deployment stages. They took merely two weeks to become operational.

After achieving much success with Versalis, Mr. Yap plans to implement additional features and increase Zolano’s production capacity in the future. “This leather-cutting solution has been helping us save a tremendous amount of time by dramatically increasing productivity. This gives me the freedom to think bigger and set higher goals for our company,” he affirms.

## **ABOUT VERSALIS**

Staying apace of emerging furniture trends is critical to remain competitive on today’s continually changing market. That’s why finding fast, efficient, cost-effective ways to satisfy the latest consumer expectations is essential. From hide digitization to offloading, Lectra’s Versalis all-in-one cutting line brings value, speed and precision to your leather cutting room. A full suite of furniture development, industrialization and pre-production solutions allows you to boost productivity to take new furniture designs to market quickly and profitably.

**DISCOVER VERSALIS**