

Fashion Event of the Century?

February 14th, 2011

Already touted as the “most stylish event of the century” by the Telegraph UK, the upcoming wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton promises to inundate the world of fashion with fads and trends that can’t be ignored. Not since the wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diana has a royal ceremony sparked such a flurry of glamour, imitation and media speculation.

Whether it’s tea towel sets, china tableware, sapphire rings or even nail polish, manufacturers are rushing to market with products meant to capitalize on international royal wedding fever.

Often referred to as an overnight royal fashion icon, Kate Middleton (age 29) has become the one to watch as the world prepares for a pageant of style and elegance the likes of which haven’t been seen since the days Princess Di walked the red carpet. So far we’ve seen some retailers such as Whistles and Reiss re-releasing past-season pieces after the Princess-to-be wore them for her engagement portraits. Replicas of Ms. Middleton’s engagement dress by Tesco are flying off the shelves, and versions of her much-talked-about engagement ring are already on the market.



Designers and retailers all over the UK, Europe and North America are making the most of the frenzy of attention accompanying the impending nuptials. Longtime royal-garb designer (and Princess Di favorite) Bruce Oldenfield was practically mobbed by media and fashion-hungry crowds when Middleton’s family was photographed shopping at his Knightsbridge store in London this winter. Rumored to be the top choice to design the royal wedding gown, Oldenfield is taking all the attention in stride, predicting that the

final product will be modest--with sleeves--ruling out any chance of a strapless dress making its way down the aisle at Westminster Abbey this April.

Sometimes referred to as an accidental fashion phenomenon, Ms. Middleton, to be known officially as Princess Catherine, has been the subject of constant scrutiny by the fashion-watchers and trend-spotters of the world. Her fitted jackets, chic feathered hats, and slim pencil skirts are already on the radar, while chunky leather belts and long socks are predicted to be the royal-loving accessories of choice in the upcoming season.

Across the pond the effects of this "Fashion Event of the Century" are already being felt. New York's Natural Sapphire Company is apparently struggling to keep up as images of Ms. Middleton's sapphire-and-diamond engagement ring (the very same ring a 19-year-old Princess Diana donned in 1981) have caused a sharp increase in demand. The future princess's luscious brown coif is getting attention too, sending urban fashionistas in droves to New York hair salons looking for the "Middleton" hair doo.

How can PLM Software help your company capitalize on important last-minute fashion trends?

Whether it's a royal wedding, an Oscar ceremony, or an elegant state dinner, high-profile media events often have an immediate impact on fashion trends and fads worldwide. Any company that seeks to stay on the cutting edge of the market must be able to react to ever-changing public tastes as quickly and as efficiently as possible. In an industry where last year's blouse may become tomorrow's must-have piece practically overnight, the ability to react to last-minute changes in demand could mean the difference between a hit campaign, and a failed product launch.

Stay Ahead of the Trends:

The only way to keep pace with the trends and stay ahead of the competition is to eliminate waste, redundancy and inefficiency from your supply chain. From concept to design, marketing and distribution, PLM (product lifecycle management) systems enable your company to make important changes at any point in your product's development. Even last-minute changes can be implemented in a way that makes the most of sudden fads or media-driven trends. So if the Royal Wedding creates an unexpected demand in your market, you can respond immediately and with as little loss, waste or redundancy as possible.

Increase Speed to Market:

A properly implemented PLM tool allows your company to decide which trends are in and which trends are out on the fly. We all know that it can sometimes take years to bring a product from the idea stage to the store shelves, but nobody should be saddled with an outdated concept when the market demands change almost daily. PLM software allows you to increase your speed to market by as much as 30%. According to Karina Kogan, of Business Management Systems, “With our VerTex software in place you will be able to create the right marketing for the right product exactly when the consumer demands it.” With the quickest possible turnaround your company can eliminate the waste and expense created by a fickle consumer apparel market.

For instance, a company involved in the design and manufacture of apparel can utilize a PLM plan in many ways. PLM software provides the tools a designer needs to create a visual for products before a physical demonstration is made, allowing you to choose what works in the moment. Designers can see which lines have potential prior to sampling, and eliminate irrelevant items in moments, instantly notifying all departments to cease all processes related to that product. “This is crucial in an industry where image matters,” says Kogan, “where looking outdated or unhip in the eyes of the consumer or the retailer is not only unacceptable, but also unprofitable.”



Streamline Data Handling:

With VerTex toolboxes you and your company can use up-to-the-minute data storage and retrieval to streamline every step of your design and marketing process. By assuring that data storage is not mishandled, or made redundant, your staff can be constantly moving forward rather than working and reworking old data. Quality errors and shipping delays can damage a brand. PLM tools eliminate the tiny slip-ups that result from data mismanagement. With proper data management you can update information universally,

preventing the loss of information and time which often occurs when files are saved in multiple locations.

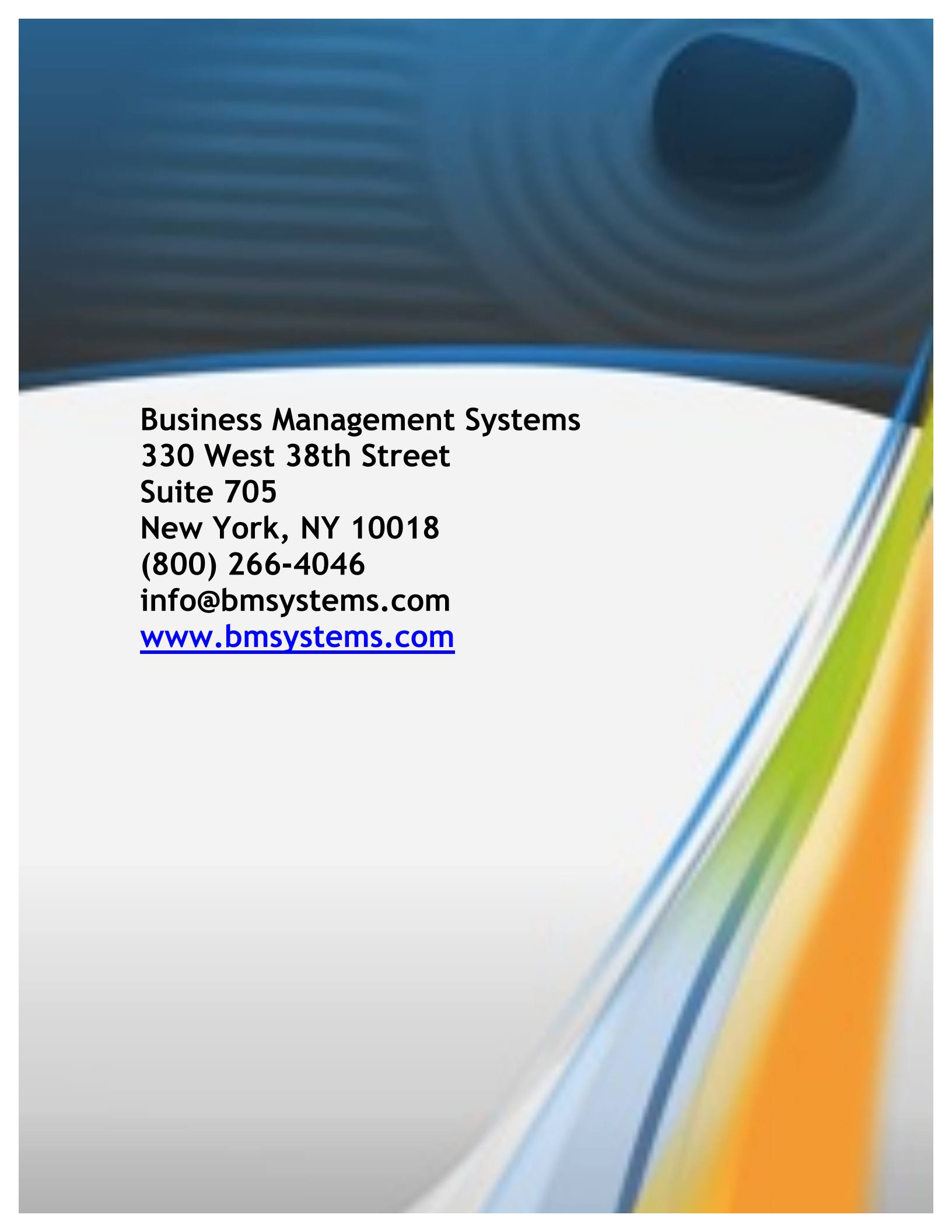
Discover the Advantage:

No one knows for sure what public media event is going to spark the next apparel trend revolution. It could be televised Oscar-night coverage of starlets on the catwalk, or a random front-page photo of Michelle Obama's newest pantsuit in action, but with the world of images, media and technology changing the pace of business it is essential that trend-driven industries cut every possible corner on the way to market. The VerTex system does just that. It allows you to streamline your product development at every phase of its lifecycle, so that you can not only stay on top of the current trends, but capitalize on them as they happen. "This is why," says Kogan, "VerTex is the only PLM system with a 100% implementation success rate, and 100% customer satisfaction."

*Consider the following points brought up by industry consultant
Walter Wilhelm at a recent technology seminar:*

- **Complete, detailed and accurate product information eliminates the margin of contractor error;**
- **The timely transmission of product information and raw materials reduces delivery deficits;**
- **Product specification accuracy increases product quality.**

So, if your company needs that extra edge bringing products to market, and wants an efficient, verifiable way to eliminate waste throughout your product lifecycle, then a PLM system is your next step. When you decide that your company should be creating trends rather than just following them, you will need a system that enables your transition. Whether you are a huge, multinational corporation, or an ambitious start-up, software like VerTex product data management systems can synchronize your entire business, from planning and design, to development, pre-production and delivery.



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