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LIFESTYLE 11/13/2014 @ 2:00PM | 2,785 views

Designer Spotlight: ThreadSuite Moves The Digital Wholesale Evolution A Step Beyond

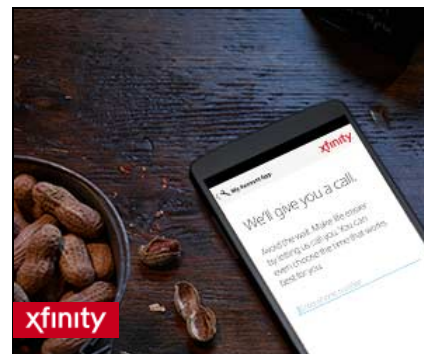


Kristina Moore, Contributor

[ThreadSuite](#), a mobile cloud sales and analytics platform for wholesale fashion buyers and brands, led by Rachel Lehman, is part of a growing community leveraging technology to modernize the wholesale industry. This backstage step is vital to providing professional women with desired goods in the marketplace. The San Francisco-based company's brand-centric, rather than buyer-centric approach differentiates itself from competitors like Joor and NuOrder. *ThreadSuite* focuses on helping each client drive profits through its dynamic and robust back-end tools. Full-service onboarding is provided. Recently, the company expanded its scope beyond fashion to include a diverse set of industries.



“San Francisco is the land of creators and early adopters. As the founder and owner of [Chaiken Clothing](#), a fashion brand based in San Francisco, I was frustrated about the lack of technology in the garment industry and saw there was an opportunity for improvement in the sales process. Knowing that San Francisco could provide the talent to do this, I started ThreadSuite to automate the sales process and create a way to get early the information brand owners need to grow sales and business.” says *ThreadSuite* Founder, Julie Chaiken. The company has an active group of advisors, including Salesforce Co-Founder Dave Moellenhoff, RelateIQ VP of Product & former Greylock Data Scientist in Residence DJ Patil, and Connery Consulting Principal Nancy Connery.



Lehman is also a founding partner of P4G Capital Partners – a female run investment firm. Previously, she was a founding member of Sorenson Capital Partners and worked at an executive level on two Olympic Games. She also donates her time and resources to numerous not-for-profit and charitable organizations.

ThreadSuite Interim CEO & Board Member, Rachel Lehman, shares more:

DS: Tell us how ThreadSuite works.

RL: ThreadSuite enables wholesalers to rapidly grow profits and streamline the sales processes. We specialize in providing powerful tools to connect with buyers, either remotely or in person, via an online and mobile sales platform. ThreadSuite presents the product line and makes ordering simple; it can even be used to gauge demand prior to production to ensure brands manufacture what their customers want to buy.

ThreadSuite gives wholesalers a way to showcase their products online and through a visually a stunning iPad app, where buyers can shop and representatives can sell anytime, anywhere. For an in-person sales experience wholesalers can utilize ThreadSuite Mobile. The iPad app allows sales reps to bring their entire collection with them wherever they go, ensuring that buyers are not limited in the order they want to place regardless of location. As the buyer views the collection on the iPad, they can either place an order directly – orders can be placed both on and off-line – or they can build a shopping cart to complete later. Above all, ThreadSuite ensures that buyers will have the ability to place an order for an item they are interested in regardless of the situation, and ThreadSuite's current customers are seeing high rates of conversions on orders because of it.

Buyers also have access to shop anytime online, and brand owners or sales representatives can put together customized shopping carts for their buyers based on their interests and previous orders. Buyers can view these in-progress orders through the ThreadSuite Buyer Portal to edit quantities, add additional item and complete the orders online. Sales representatives are able to leverage the personal relationships they have

built with the buyers and create these recommended carts, and buyers appreciate the ease with which they can now place an order and reorder.

Wholesalers on ThreadSuite also have the ability to move with the ebbs and flows of a selling season. Wholesalers can now showcase their line while simultaneously incorporating feedback, design changes and product line revisions.

Perhaps the most compelling part of ThreadSuite's comprehensive offering is its easy-to-use but powerful analytics. ThreadSuite automatically collects the data necessary to answer key questions that often lead to missed opportunities and lost profits. Questions such as:

-What products in the line aren't going to reach my production minimums? Who had interest in the cancelled products that I should contact with a viable substitution?

-Which of my prior customers haven't ordered this year or at the level they normally do? What products are best suited for them and how do I focus my sales efforts?

-Which of my sales representative are producing and which should I assist to reach their goals?.

By streamlining sales calls, line previews, and, ultimately, orders through easy-to-use mobile apps and web portals, ThreadSuite powered brands are simultaneously selling more and becoming more efficient. We make it easy for wholesale companies to reach out to their buyers, simplify the ordering process and understand buyer behavior to create stronger sales propositions and make informed business decisions.



ThreadSuite Interim CEO & Board Member, Rachel Lehman. [Image courtesy of ThreadSuite]

DS: There is a much-needed recent surge of emerging and established fashion brands on a mission to address the needs of professional women. In what ways, does *ThreadSuite* support this mission?

RL: ThreadSuite's Software as a Service (SaaS) offering provides sophisticated tools that have previously only been available to a handful of multinational brands. ThreadSuite enables emerging fashion brands to compete and provide commercially viable products to the market. Leveling the playing field, ThreadSuite's SaaS offering is right-sized in features and function perfectly balancing ease of use with powerful business insights and automation.

For established brands, ThreadSuite's Enterprise Edition provides the needed empirical data, tools, hands-on support and systems to evaluate extensions

to the brand's classic offerings and the viability of smaller more focused offerings in a powerful fully integrated platform that can run the core business. ThreadSuite is the perfect choice for front-end to more complicated ERP/CRM solutions focused on simple sales oriented needs.

Either way, expansion of product lines equates to more choices for professional women not to mention enables female run brands to enjoy greater staying power in the market.



[Image courtesy of ThreadSuite]

DS: Which retail categories can benefit from using *ThreadSuite*?

RL: While ThreadSuite began servicing the apparel industry, we can help almost any wholesale manufacturer with a product catalog. Currently we are working with organizations ranging from fashion brands designing apparel, footwear, accessories, and athletic wear to furniture, specialty food, sporting goods, bicycles and beauty products.

ThreadSuite is a powerful but flexible tool that has been created to solve a common need in the sales and production cycle of a diverse set of products. We've carefully built a suite of tools, systems, data capture, automated analytics and visual reports that are easily tailored to serve the unique needs of a variety of industries.

DS: What inspired you to get involved with the company?

RL: As a serial entrepreneur and investor, I've spent my career seeking opportunities to identify and grow companies that can leverage technology solutions to expand markets, elevate revenues and grow margins. When I discovered ThreadSuite, I saw a company with huge potential to revolutionize the wholesale market; which shockingly was still largely using pen & paper and fax machines with sales representatives lugging around suitcases of physical samples and catalogs.

ThreadSuite was conceived of by an accomplished, thoughtful and forward looking founder who got her start as a designer knowing the challenges firsthand. The platform she had built was serving her fashion business but had the potential to be expanded to a much wider audience given the challenges she had faced were commonplace. As we interviewed potential customers and beta tested our product, we learned that brand owners were working with antiquated ordering systems, lacked visibility into their sales channels, had difficulty incorporating customer feedback/desires into product lines, had limited customer showcasing tools and had none of the analytics that we could offer. Today, it excites me to see large and small brands use our platform to grow their profits and streamline their businesses to reach new heights of success. We see ourselves as partners in those achievements, and that fuels our passion to deliver even more powerful and affordable tools for our customers.

DS: What's next for ThreadSuite?

RL: ThreadSuite is looking forward to an exciting 2015. As we have expanded our focus we've been met with a warm reception, giving us the room to grow and service much larger and diverse set of industries with a variety of product offerings. In the past, we've had to turn down a few opportunities based on complicated product attributes but through the efforts of our exceptional development team we are now in a position to go full-throttle into these markets with solutions that have been thoughtfully designed to elegantly address the business need.

We are already experiencing rapid growth and plan to expand our employee base to keep pace to continue providing premier customer support and service.

We couldn't be more excited by our progress or thrilled by the opportunities.

DS: In addition to running *ThreadSuite*, how else do you enjoy spending your time? What activities do you do that allow you to replenish your creativity and energy?

RL: I find true joy working with passionate, collaborative people who share a commitment to excellence and are driven to achieve their dreams. ThreadSuite is comprised of not only some of the finest and most passionate people I know but also those who share this core value and have committed themselves to embody it. The infectious energy that comes from working with such a capable and delightful team fills my cup.

Outside of working with ThreadSuite, I donate my time and resources to organizations that share a common vision of creating a better world through humanitarian missions, advancement in educational modalities, and equal rights/opportunities for minorities. I'm an active contributor/board member/committee member to Marin Primary & Middle School, Compass Family Services, Amfar, GLAAD, the Exploratorium and other organizations that dedicate themselves to these goals.

As for creativity, I'm a guitar player who is delighted by the endless creativity the arts provide especially music and the power it has to elevate spirits and tell stories. Additionally, I'm a proud mother of two amazing children who keep me engaged, laughing, and inspire creativity through their unbiased and unbridled view of the world and the freedom of imagination that they so easily share.

For more information on *Rachel Lehman & ThreadSuite*, visit www.threadsuite.com.

Do you have a fashion designer, brand or company you would like featured on Forbes Style File: Designer Spotlight? Let us know in the comments section.

Kristina Moore is a style expert focusing on visual presentation as a dynamic professional tool. She is the founder and editor of [Corporate Fashionista](#). Kristina welcomes your comments and questions.

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