

SA clothing group goes global

Eqos, Inc. (www.eqos.com), a provider of on-demand global sourcing and supplier management solutions for the retail supply chain, has announced that South Africa's Edgars Consolidated Stores Limited (Edcon) has gone live with Eqos' global sourcing solution.

Operating as Edgars department store since 1929, Edcon (www.edcon.co.za) is South Africa's leading clothing, footwear and textiles retailing group. The company manages 10 retail brands (Edgars, Jet, CNA, Red Square, Boardmans, Legit, Jet Shoes, Temptations, Prato and JetMart) in nearly 1,000 stores across southern Africa. The group's annual sales top more than US\$2.3 billion.

“This solution is enabling us to proactively manage critical path activities from initial product design through supplier collaboration to purchase order processes. Furthermore, the Eqos global sourcing solution is introducing a harmonized set of best practice business processes for our buyers, QA, agents and suppliers to support the rigorous demands of global sourcing,” said Edcon's business integration executive Calvin Low.

The initial deployment will improve the private label merchandise buying processes for apparel lines offered by Edgars, the company's department store brand, and Jet, the company's discount outlet brand. The sourcing application has been integrated with various Edcon systems, such as Oracle Retail (Retek) and external logistics service providers, to deliver a seamless sourcing process and that minimises the workload on the buyers. Edcon plans to roll out the solutions to additional apparel categories and general merchandise later this year.

Jane Biddle, Eqos chief marketing officer, said, “As leading retailers such as Edcon are looking to scale buying operations, working collaboratively with suppliers worldwide becomes a critical issue. The challenge however, lies in automating what has traditionally been a disparate set of manual tasks involving cumbersome spreadsheets and communication limitations.”

Low added, “The improved visibility of the overall critical path associated with the sourcing process will give Edcon executives a high-level view of sourcing processes, promoting comprehensive performance analysis and ‘Fast Fashion’ capabilities. In addition, every function within supplier collaboration will be recorded and tracked with the global sourcing solution.” The Eqos critical path capabilities are expected to substantially improve the efficiency of the company's buying teams across various brands and product categories, resulting in faster product lifecycles, and ultimately, improved margins.

Edcon was purchased earlier this year by Boston-based private investment firm Bain Capital, which acquired the company's entire ordinary share capital for more than US\$3.6 billion. The company, now fully owned by Bain, is no longer traded on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange.