

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and light blue overalls, is leaning over a desk in a fashion studio. She is smiling and looking at a laptop screen. In the background, there is a black dressmaker's mannequin and a rack of clothes.

# Buyer Guide For PLM Software

[www.worldfashionexchange.com](http://www.worldfashionexchange.com)

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Helping fashion teams make better products faster

# 01. Introduction

## Overview of the PLM software purchasing process for fashion brands

As a fashion business owner, you're not a stranger to the value of staying on top of your product development process and keeping all operations in line. From design to merchandising to production to retail, the product lifecycle is multi-faceted and time-consuming. That's where Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) software comes in.

PLM software is a tool designed to streamline and optimize the product development process, saving you time and resources while also improving efficiency and accuracy. It can help you manage everything from product data and materials to budgets and schedules, all in a centralized location—which you should be able to access from anywhere, at any time. PLM can also help with regulatory compliance management, collaboration among team members, and data-informed decision making.

PLM is the lifeline of any successful consumer business. This is why it can be overwhelming to determine which one is right for your business. That's why we have designed this Buyer's Guide to help fashion businesses like you make an informed decision.

The guide will walk you through the process of determining your needs, researching software options, evaluating potential solutions, and making the final decision. We'll provide an overview of the purchasing process and offer best practices for choosing the right PLM software for your fashion brand. We will also touch upon how your business can prepare for a smooth implementation process so you can get the most value out of your investment.

**We recommend you approach this process with a clear understanding of your business's specific needs and goals. For everything else, this guide is the perfect resource to help you choose a PLM software that's best for YOUR fashion brand.**



## 02. Determining Business Needs

Before beginning your search for the best PLM software, take a step back and assess your current product development processes. Start by identifying any pain points or bottlenecks that you would like to improve upon with the right PLM solution.

One way to do this is to map out your current process, from conception to delivery. This could include tasks such as research and development, design, sourcing, sampling, production, quality control, and more.

It's incredibly important to gather input from team members who are directly involved in the product development process. They can offer valuable insights into what's working well and what could be improved upon.

Once you have a clear understanding of your current product development process as well as pain points, you can start looking for the desired capabilities and features that you would desire in PLM software.

Top PLM features that fashion businesses should look for:

- **Collaboration tools for team communication and document sharing**
- **Product specification and technical pack management**
- **Material and design inspiration libraries**
- **Supplier management and sourcing capabilities**
- **Quality control and regulatory compliance support**
- **Project and critical path management**
- **Design, prototyping and sample approval tools**
- **Reporting and analytics capabilities**

Use this stage to prioritize the features that are most important to your business. This will help you narrow down the options and choose PLM software that truly meets your needs.

***TIP: Make note of areas where your current system is inefficient, manual or time consuming, as well as any challenges or roadblocks that your team faces.***



## Tips to help you identify desired capabilities in a PLM software:

- **Prioritize personalization to ensure success:**

The first one to keep in mind is to tailor your PLM software to the specific needs of your industry. For example, a fashion brand that specializes in sustainable and ethical sourcing may prioritize features for strong supplier management and compliance assurance. On the other hand, a brand that focuses on rapid prototyping and rapid turnaround may prioritize PLM software with strong design and prototyping tools.

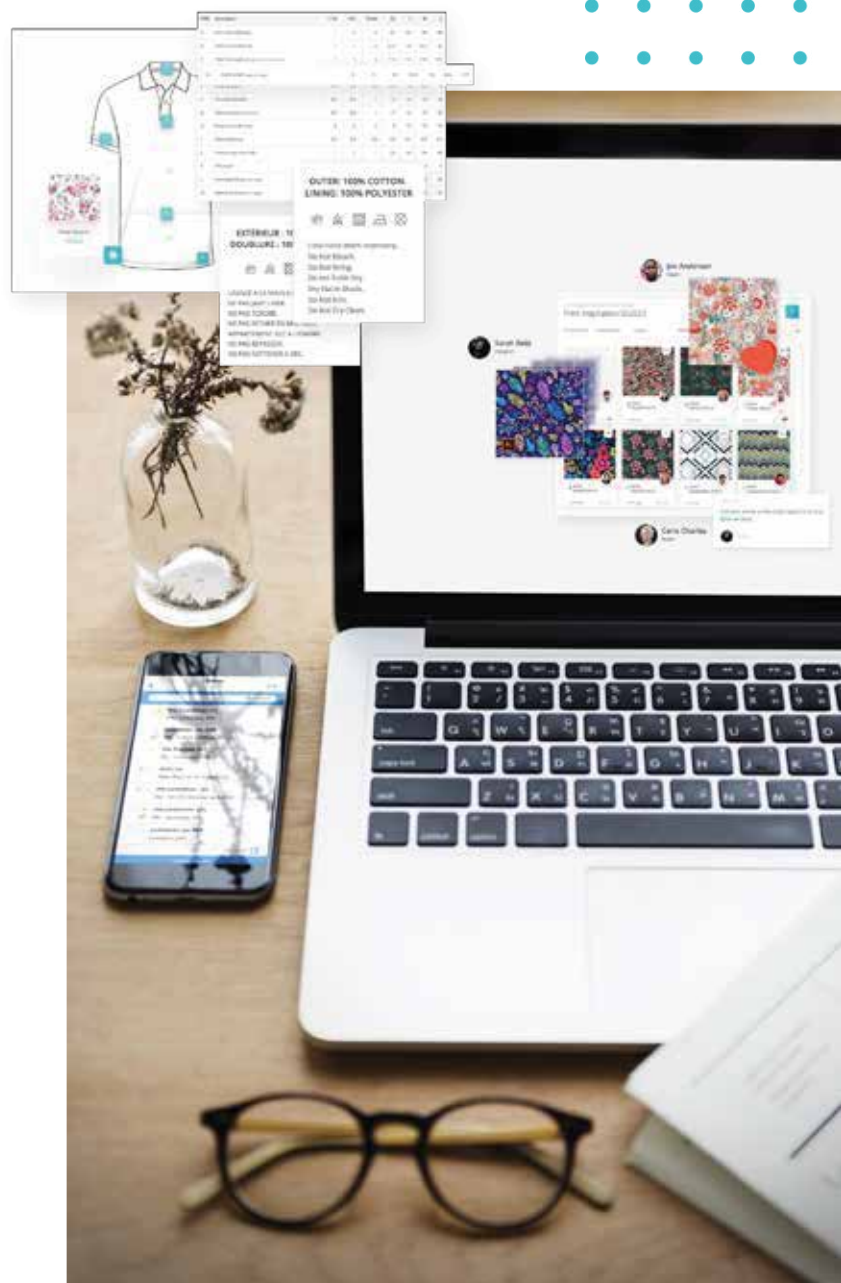
- **Consider your long-term goals:** While it's important to address current pain points, it's also important to think about where you want your business to be in the future. Look for PLM software that will not only address your current needs, but also has the potential to grow and adapt with your business as it evolves.

- **Research industry trends:** Stay up to date on the latest trends and innovations in the fashion industry, as well as the capabilities of different PLM software options. This will help you choose a solution that is both current and forward-thinking.

- **Think about scalability:** If you anticipate your business growing in the future (who doesn't?) ,consider PLM software that's scalable and can grow with you. This will help you avoid the need to switch to a new solution down the line.

- **Don't be afraid to ask for help:** If you're not sure what you need or what's available, don't be afraid to ask for help. Reach out to the vendor or a PLM software consultant for guidance and support.

- **Keep an open mind:** While it's important to have a clear understanding of your needs, it's also important to be open to new ideas and capabilities that you may not have considered initially. Be willing to explore different options and consider the long-term value they could bring to your business.



# 03. Researching Software Options

## A. Price Comparison

Price is one of the biggest considerations when it comes to purchasing PLM software. It's important to find a solution that fits within your budget, but also provides the features and capabilities that you need.

Start by creating a list of potential software options and compare their prices side by side. This will help you get a sense of the range of prices available and how they compare to each other.

Keep in mind that the initial cost of PLM software is not the only price to consider. There may also be ongoing subscription fees, maintenance costs, and customization costs to factor in. Be sure to fully understand the total cost of ownership before deciding.

It's also a good idea to consider the long-term value that PLM software will bring to your business. While a cheaper option may seem appealing in the short-term, it may not have the capabilities or scalability that you need in the long run. On the other hand, a more expensive option may provide more features and benefits that justify the higher price tag.

Another thing to remember is that sometimes, you get what you pay for. Cheaper options may not have the same level of support, security, or reliability as more expensive options. Be sure to weigh the pros and cons and consider the overall value that PLM software will bring to your business.

## Best practices for price comparison when purchasing a PLM software:

- **Don't compromise on features:** While it's important to stay within your budget, don't compromise on the features that are most important to your business. Make a list of must-have features and prioritize them when comparing prices.
- **Look for bundled pricing:** Some PLM software vendors offer bundled pricing, where you can purchase multiple features or modules at a discounted price. This can be a good way to get more value for your money.
- **Consider financing options:** If the upfront cost of PLM software is a concern, consider financing options such as a loan or payment plan. This can help you spread the cost over time and make it more manageable.
- **Look for special deals or discounts:** Many PLM software vendors offer special deals or discounts for new customers or for purchasing during a certain time period. Be sure to ask about any promotions that may be available.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for a price match:** If you find similar PLM software at a lower price, don't be afraid to ask the vendor if they are willing to match the price. This can save you money and help you get the best deal.

***TIP: Don't be afraid to negotiate. If you have found PLM software that you love but the price is out of your budget, reach out to the vendor and see if there is room for negotiation. They may be willing to work with you to come to a mutually beneficial arrangement.***

## B. Integration with Other Software

When you're purchasing PLM or any software for that matter, you also need to consider how it will integrate with other software and systems that you already use in your business. PLM software that can seamlessly integrate with your existing tools will ensure minimum downtime in your workflows and maximum efficiency post implementation.

Keep a handy list of the software and systems that you currently use in your business, including your enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, customer relationship management (CRM) system, and any other tools that you rely on.

When researching PLM software options, look for solutions that offer integration with the tools on your list. Many PLM software vendors offer pre-built integrations with popular software such as NetSuite, Microsoft Dynamics, GT Nexus, Fast React and Adobe Creative Cloud. Some may also offer custom integration services for more specialized tools.

It's also a good idea to consider the overall flexibility and openness of PLM software when it comes to integration. Look for solutions that offer APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) or other customization options that allow you to easily connect to other systems.

***TIP: Keep in mind the potential for integration with future software and systems. If you anticipate adding or switching to new tools in the future, look for PLM software that's open and flexible enough to accommodate these changes.***

## Connect The Dots With WFX Integrations



## C. User Reviews and Vendor Reputation

As you research potential PLM software options, it's important to consider the reputation of the vendor and the experience of other users. User reviews and the vendor's reputation can provide valuable insights into the reliability, support, and overall value of PLM software.

One best practice is to read online reviews and testimonials from other users. Look for reviews on the vendor's website, as well as on independent review sites such as G2 and Capterra. Pay attention to both the positive and negative reviews to get a well-rounded understanding of the software's strengths and weaknesses.

Another factor to consider is the vendor's overall reputation in the industry. Look for a vendor that has a track record of providing high-quality software and excellent support. Consider their history, financial stability, and any awards or recognition they have received.

When evaluating user reviews and the vendor's reputation, you should also keep in mind that no software is perfect. It's normal to see a mix of positive and negative reviews, and it's up to you to weigh the overall balance and decide if the software is a good fit for your business.

***TIP: Reach out to the vendor directly and ask for references. They should provide you with a list of current clients and/or case studies. This will give you an unbiased perspective on the software's capabilities and the vendor's support.***

## Best practices to follow while reading vendor case studies:

- **Look for case studies that are relevant to your business:** Look for case studies that involve businesses that are like yours in size, industry, and needs. These will be the most relevant and informative.
- **Pay attention to the details:** Read the case study carefully and pay attention to the specific challenges and goals that the business faced, as well as the specific features and capabilities of the PLM software that helped them achieve their goals.
- **Consider the scope of the case study:** Look for case studies that provide a detailed, in-depth look at the business's experience with the PLM software. This will give you a more complete understanding of the software's capabilities and value.
- **Reach out to the vendor for more information:** If you have any questions or concerns about a case study, don't be afraid to reach out to the vendor for more information. They should be able to provide you with additional details or clarify any points that are unclear.
- **Verify the validity of the information:** Some vendors may exaggerate the results or cherry pick the best examples for their case studies. Try to verify the information by reaching out to the customer mentioned in the study and get their feedback, this will give you a better sense of how the software has performed in a real-world scenario.





## D. Requesting Demos or Free Trials

Once you've narrowed down your list of potential PLM software options, it's time to take the next step and request demos or free trials. The demo gives you an opportunity to test drive the software and get a firsthand feel for its capabilities, user interface, and overall user experience.

Schedule demos or trials with multiple vendors to compare the different software options to easily compare which one is the best fit for your business. Be sure to provide the vendor with your specific needs and goals so they can tailor their demo to your business.

You should also make sure that the demo is viewed by the people who end up using the software. Invite them to ask questions and raise any issues that are important during the demo stage.

***TIP: Involve the team members from your company who will ultimately use the software in any demos or free trials. Invite them to ask questions and raise any issues that are important to them, so that you can evaluate how well the software meets their needs.***

## When evaluating demos or trials, pay attention to the following things:

- **Ease of use:** Look for software that's intuitive and easy to navigate. You want to ensure that your team will be able to use the software effectively with minimal training.
- **Features:** Be sure to evaluate the features of the software against your specific needs and goals. Does it have all the functionalities that you need? Are there any key features that are missing?
- **Performance:** Pay attention to how well the software performs during the demo or trial. Does it run smoothly? Are there any glitches or bugs?
- **Scalability:** Consider the size of your business now and in the future. Check if the software can accommodate your current and potential needs and if it can scale accordingly.
- **Customization:** Some software may require customization to better fit your business, check if the vendor offers customization services and if it fits within your budget.

In addition, keep in mind that demos and trials are only a snapshot of the software's capabilities and may not include all the features available. Use them as an aid but not as your only deciding factor. Don't hesitate to ask for multiple demos and walkthrough of specific features before making your final decision.

# 04. Deciding and Purchasing

Choosing the best option for long-term value

Now that you have gathered all the information and evaluated different PLM software options, it's time to decide and choose the best option for your business. It's important to not only consider the features, price and performance but also think about the long-term value that the software will bring to your business.

## PLM checklist for fashion businesses:

- 1** Does software solve your current and most challenging problems?
- 2** Does it have a good track record with users and a solid reputation in your industry?
- 3** Is the vendor's customer support reliable and responsive?
- 4** What level of training and support does the vendor provide? Will it be enough for your team to use the software effectively?
- 5** Are the pricing and subscription options flexible enough for you?
- 6** Is the software cloud-based? Can it be accessed on smartphones and tablets, to enable your team to work on the go?
- 7** Does it integrate well with your current systems?
- 8** How does it handle data migration? Does the vendor provide data migration services and support?
- 9** Is it scalable? What is the vendor's track record for updates and maintenance? How often are updates released, and do they come with any additional costs?
- 10** Does the software have a secure portal for suppliers to login and access the necessary information?
- 11** How does the software handle communication and collaboration with suppliers? Is there a built-in messaging system or other features to facilitate communication?
- 12** Is the software customizable? What is the cost of additional or custom features, or added users?
- 13** How does the software handle data security and compliance?
- 14** Does the software offer analytics and reporting capabilities, allowing you to track and analyze critical KPIs?
- 15** How does it compare to similar options in the market, in terms of features and pricing?

# 05. Implementing and Roll-out

## A. Training team members

After choosing the best PLM software for your business, the next step is to implement and roll it out to your team. Training your team members is an important aspect of this process as it ensures that they can use the software effectively and efficiently.

### Best practices to keep in mind when training your team members:

- **Develop a training plan:** Before you begin training your team members, develop a plan that outlines the objectives, goals, and the schedule of the training. This will help you stay organized and ensure that you cover all the important aspects of the software.
- **Make it hands-on:** Make the training as hands-on as possible. Encourage team members to practice using the software in a simulated environment, so they can get a feel for it before using it in a live setting.
- **Tailor the training to your team members:** Keep in mind that different team members may have different skill levels and learning styles. Tailor the training to their needs and preferences, to ensure that everyone gets the most out of it.
- **Provide ongoing support:** Provide ongoing support to your team members, whether it's in the form of regular check-ins, follow-up training sessions, or a knowledge base they can refer to.
- **Keep communication open:** Encourage your team members to ask questions and provide feedback during and after the training. Keep the lines of communication open and address any issues or concerns that arise.



## B. Integrating with existing processes and systems

Integrating the PLM software with your existing processes and systems is an essential step in the implementation and roll-out process. A well thought out and executed integration plan will help ensure a smooth transition, minimal disruption to your business operations, and maximal efficiency.

### Best practices for integrating your PLM software with existing processes and systems:

- **Prioritize the integration tasks:**

Identify which processes and systems are most critical and need to be integrated first, so that you can minimize any disruption to your business operations.

- **Test the integration before rolling it out:**

Before implementing the integration in a live environment, test it in a controlled environment to ensure that it works as expected, and that all bugs have been resolved.

- **Create a detailed integration plan:** Once you have identified what needs to be integrated, and how, create a detailed plan that outlines the steps, timelines, and resources needed to execute the integration.

- **Involve relevant stakeholders:** Involve all relevant stakeholders, such as IT, operations, and business teams, in the integration process. This will ensure that everyone understands the changes and how they will be impacted, and that they can provide feedback and input.

- **Communicate with your vendors and partners:** Communicate with your suppliers, retailers and other external partners, to inform them of the integration process, and identify any potential issues or concerns they may have.
- **Monitor and improve:** Monitor the integration after it has been implemented and make improvements as needed. Identify any areas that need further optimization to ensure the continued success of the integration.



## C. Planning for ongoing support and maintenance

Once the PLM software has been implemented and integrated with your existing processes and systems, it's important to plan for ongoing support and maintenance to ensure that the software continues to function optimally and meets your changing needs.

Having a solid plan in place for ongoing support and maintenance can help minimize disruptions, ensure that issues are addressed quickly and effectively, and help you get the most value out of your software investment.

### Guided plan for managing ongoing PLM support and maintenance:

- **Establish a dedicated support team:** Appoint a dedicated support team, who will be responsible for providing ongoing support and maintenance for the PLM software. The team should be composed of individuals with the necessary technical expertise and knowledge of the software.
- **Have a clear escalation process:** Develop a clear escalation process that outlines the steps to be taken when issues or problems arise, and who is responsible for resolving them. This will help ensure that issues are addressed quickly and effectively.
- **Regularly schedule software updates and upgrades:** Schedule regular software updates and upgrades, and make sure they are executed in a timely and efficient manner. This will help keep the software up to date and ensure that it continues to meet your needs.
- **Keep a knowledge base:** Keep a knowledge base of frequently asked questions and troubleshooting tips that the support team can refer to. This will help them resolve issues more quickly and efficiently.

- **Communicate with your vendor:**

Build a strong relationship with your vendor and communicate with them regularly. They will be able to provide ongoing support and help you resolve any issues that arise, in addition to keeping you informed about new updates and features.





## 06. Conclusion

Make the most out of your PLM software investment

Purchasing Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) software for your fashion business can be a daunting task, but with the right knowledge and approach, you can make an informed decision that will benefit your business in the long run.

In the fashion industry, where product development cycles are short and the competition is fierce, having a personalized PLM system can make a significant difference. It allows you to automate and streamline product development, reducing errors and delays, and providing real-time visibility into the entire product lifecycle.

To make the most out of your PLM software implementation, monitor the performance constantly, make improvements and offer regular training to your team members. This will help you identify any issues that arise, and address them promptly, ensuring that your business continues to receive maximum value from whichever PLM software you choose.

***TIP: Consider a cloud-based PLM system that's easily accessed by your team members, suppliers, and other external partners, wherever they are, enabling them to work remotely and on-the-go.***

### To recap, the purchasing process should involve:

- Assessing your current product development process and identifying pain points
- Identifying desired capabilities and features in a PLM software
- Researching software options, comparing prices, evaluating vendor reputation and user reviews, and checking for integration with other software
- Requesting demos or free trials
- Choosing the best option for long-term value by considering the overall vision and mission of your company

### When it comes to implementation, it's crucial to:

- Train your team members to use the software effectively
- Plan for integration with existing processes and systems
- Plan for ongoing support and maintenance

## 07. WFX Fashion PLM

WFX PLM: Helping fashion teams make better products faster

WFX Fashion PLM is a comprehensive solution that can revolutionize the way fashion teams manage their product development process. Here are a few of the key benefits of using WFX Fashion PLM for your brand:

- **360° View:** It provides a central hub for managing the entire product development process, from design to sourcing, production planning, and logistics. This allows teams to get a clear, real-time view of the entire product lifecycle, improving efficiency and reducing errors.
- **Cloud-based:** It's cloud-based, which means it can be accessed from anywhere, at any time. This allows teams to collaborate seamlessly, regardless of location or device.
- **Integrated:** It can easily integrate with other software, such as CAD, ERP, and financial systems, making it easy for teams to streamline their workflows and improve efficiency.
- **Customizable:** It is highly customizable and can be tailored to your brand's specific needs. This ensures that the solution is a perfect fit for your team's unique requirements.
- **Support:** WFX has a dedicated support team, regular training and a knowledge base that ensures teams can fully utilize the software and resolve any issues that arise.
- **Scalable:** WFX PLM is a flexible solution that can scale to match the growth of your brand and adapt to your changing needs.
- **Cost-effective:** It eliminates the need for expensive IT infrastructure and reduces hardware costs, making it a cost-effective solution.
- **Personalization:** WFX caters specifically to the fashion industry, so we offer a highly personalized solution that can be tailored to the specific business requirements of your brand.

- **Collaboration:** WFX PLM allows for easy collaboration between team members, suppliers, and external partners, ensuring seamless communication and a single source of truth.
- **Reporting and Analytics:** It offers robust reporting and analytics capabilities, allowing teams to track key performance indicators and make data-driven decisions.
- **Mobile Access:** WFX's mobile app allows teams to capture inspiration, monitor critical milestones and key insights even when they're on the go.
- **Vendor Management:** WFX PLM includes tools for real-time communication with vendors, helping teams easily collaborate with vendors and improve supplier relationships.
- **Product Traceability:** WFX provides a clear and transparent view of the entire product lifecycle, so teams can track products from design to delivery, and improve accountability.
- **Automated Workflows:** It automates repetitive tasks and streamlines workflows, freeing up teams to focus on higher-value activities.
- **Security:** It is built with industry-standard security measures, ensuring that all data is protected and confidential.

WFX Fashion PLM can help fashion teams improve efficiency, reduce errors and delays, and gain a competitive edge in the industry. With its comprehensive and customizable approach, it's the perfect choice for fashion brands of any size looking to digitally transform the way they manage their product development process.



**To learn more, sign up for a  
FREE consultation here**

**Schedule A Demo**



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