

Lusso Cycle Clothing Changing gear with digitalisation

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A cycle clothing manufacturer has embarked on a digital transformation which will boost productivity five-fold, create new jobs and open up new global markets.

Lusso Cycle Clothing (Lusso), based in Radcliffe, is one of the only two cycle clothing companies that still manufacture all its products in the UK.

With the support of Made Smarter, it is replacing manual production processes with an Auto CAD and CAM system, material scanner and photo digitiser technology.

This investment will speed up the cutting process by 80%, increase productivity by 400 percent, boost revenue, open up to new markets, and create three new jobs in the next 12 months.

It will also enable the business to start a new chapter in its 41-year history.

Jake Wright, Managing Director, said: “We want to be recognised as one of the major cycling clothing brands in the UK, to build on the excellent strong reputation of our products and services by expanding into new markets, and to continue to grow international sales.

“Made Smarter has given us the know-how, the confidence and the digital tools to take this business to another level.”

The Challenge

Established in 1982 by cyclist John Harrison and his wife Dorothy, Lusso has become a favoured clothing brand for professional and amateur cyclists globally for its quality, price, sustainability and longevity.

In 2021, Jake Wright, a 23-year-old professional cyclist and former national Time Trial champion, took over the business, keeping on John as part of the succession strategy.

However, the cutting process has been manual throughout its history, limiting production capacity and relying on the skill and expertise of John, who is looking to retire.

After a rebrand, which included a new website, product restructure and increased marketing activity, orders increased. But the manual processes could not keep up with the demand.

Jake said: “The cutting process has always been manual for the last 40 years, and included manually laying up the cloth, placing cardboard patterns over the material, chalking around it, cutting manually with a tower knife and then bundling it up and giving it to the sewing machinists.

“I knew if I was to make a success of the business I would have to digitalise the cutting process.”

The Solution

Jake turned to Made Smarter who worked with the business to create a digital roadmap and connected them with Vetigraph, a fashion industry digital solution company, to develop a technology solution to overcome their key challenges and understand the process of pattern digitisation.

This included visits to fellow textile manufacturing businesses Derek Rose and Roch Valley who had also worked with Vetigraph through the Made Smarter programme.

As a result, Lusso has implemented an Auto CAD and CAM system to integrate the design and production, an SK25 auto cutter to replace the manual cutting process, and an OH photo digitiser to enable data capture and scan patterns into a CAD/CAM system.

The Benefits

The impact on production is forecast to be extraordinary. The cutting process will accelerate by 80% and increase production from 60 garments a day to 300.

Digitalisation will allow better tracking systems and improve metrics such as fabric yield, elapsed cutting time and efficiency.

Increased production will enable Lusso to increase the number of machinists it employs by three. Meanwhile, the efficiency gain will enable existing staff to also focus on more high value areas of the business such as research and development.



Automation will also enable Lusso to work towards its sustainability goals through reduced waste through human error and better management of energy and resources.

The technology will also enable former owner John Harrison to retire knowing the business will continue to grow.

Jake said: “John built a fantastic and well-loved brand with his bare hands over four decades. I have been honoured to take on the business and develop a roadmap to a digital future and a successful one.”

The future

Lusso has already begun to shape its new team, appointing a factory floor manager to focus on the production schedule, and a digital

champion to oversee the digital transformation of the company and support all 11 employees in their digital journey.

Lusso’s investment will allow it to meet the demand for custom cycling clothing for clubs, teams and even charity events. It will also allow the business to venture into other sportswear markets such as football, rugby, run and gym wear.

Another potential area being explored is for Lusso to become a private label manufacturer for global clothing brands, producing unbranded garments.

