

# The State of the Fashion Industry



## Q&A With Jehan Mutaliph

Chief Digital Officer, MAS Holdings



We spoke to Jehan Mutaliph (Chief Digital Officer, MAS Holdings) on how MAS is using technology to be more agile and receptive to the needs of the new marketplace.

Below are condensed insights from the Q&A about the current state and future of the fashion industry. [Click here to watch the entire interview.](#)

## Question 01

# What are your current priorities in terms of technology and how it supports the business?

- When looking at current priorities during this stage of the pandemic, our main priority is delivering to promise.
- We don't want technology to fail our ability to deliver to promise, so ensuring that we have robust systems and secure systems is key.
- With all the cybersecurity threats that are prevalent these days, having a secured IT infrastructure is important for us to prepare and to make ourselves relevant in the future as well.

## Question 02

# What role did technology play in helping MAS Holdings navigate the COVID-19 pandemic?

- We had already invested in infrastructure, systems, and connectivity that enabled us to work from home. Majority of our processes were digitized, which made it easier for our employees to keep working and be connected.
- In our manufacturing plants, we used technology to understand the risk of contamination, improve contact tracing, assess the risk in that community, and understand the risk to our team members.
- In terms of client engagement, physical prototypes were first developed, but as travel limitations persisted, we turned to virtual prototyping, which was initiated before but not at scale until recently.

## Question 03

# How is MAS utilizing technology to anticipate customer needs and respond proactively?



- When talking about customer demands, we take into consideration:
  - Anticipating demand for which products should be created for the next season
  - Anticipating how much to sell
- We were already using technology to support our product creation teams to anticipate, validate and research on what's going to work in terms of consumer preferences, whether it is selling well or not, what customers are saying in terms ratings and reviews. But, this year, with only online consumers, we had to change our approach.
- With 30-40 percent of sales coming through online channels, we debated whether the point of view and pain points of a digital consumer was fully represented in our product creation research. Until then, our product creation was fully focused on brick-and-mortar consumers.
- We started using technology to understand more about the pain points of a digital consumer. This helps us check and adjust the products that we're creating, by injecting feedback into the product design process.
- This is in addition to the technologies we already have to improve our manufacturing capabilities in terms reducing lead time and increasing speed to market.

## Question 04

# As we see brands moving to a 'digital first' strategy, how can supply chain partners re-align themselves to support this shift with the use of technology?

- As brands move into a digital-first strategy, we as supply chain partners need to help them in the digital channel. To do that, we've identified the capabilities that we need to build - faster product creation and improved sourcing and manufacturing operations.
- Processes in each of these will have to be checked and adjusted in order to service online brands because their needs from the supply chain will be different.
- The feedback loop is the main difference between a brand that sells online and a brand that sells in-store since a digital consumer is more likely to have more information to make buying decisions than a consumer making a purchase in a physical store.
- If these buying decisions are made faster, they would expect the supply chain partners to respond at that same rate to reduce the risk of lost sales. Technology can play a huge role in this regard.

## Question 05

**As an innovator in the apparel industry, what lessons can you share for the industry to be more agile and receptive to the needs of the marketplace?**

- You must reduce your lead time because you can't achieve agility if you don't reduce your lead time. You also need to have the capability to make things in smaller batches. Those two main things will increase your agility as a manufacturing partner.
- My advice would be, don't try to start with technology and try to find a use for it. Have a clear vision and from there onwards, break down the problem and see where technology can be adopted to solve that problem.



# About the Speaker



- Jehan Mutaliph started his career implementing SAP ERP at MAS and then moved on to give leadership to eCommerce & retail systems for leading fashion brands in the UK & Europe. He has over 20 years of experience, giving leadership to teams and engaging with customers across Sri Lanka and Europe.
- Jehan wears two hats at MAS. He gives leadership to driving MAS' futureproofing agenda and he also gives leadership to MAS' IT infrastructure and security functions.

Jehan Mutaliph

Chief Digital Officer, MAS Holdings



**Next** Step:

# Talk to us about digitization

If you are looking to digitize processes or need a business case for an intended transformation, we can help. Please submit your contact details so we can begin a conversation.

Get in touch so we can begin a conversation:

[info@attuneconsulting.com](mailto:info@attuneconsulting.com)

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