

CASE STUDY

HOW AN E-COMMERCE APPAREL RETAILER FOUND THE RIGHT WMS TO SUPPORT THEIR GROWTH

ABOUT THE CLIENT



An E-Commerce Apparel Retailer built its business model centered on personalization. But as the company scaled across three distribution centers, the infrastructure behind that promise began to strain.



CHALLENGE

The culprit was a highly customized, internally developed Warehouse Management System (WMS) that had served the company well in its early years, but was approaching its limits. The platform couldn't support the operational flexibility, automation readiness, or effective reporting the business now required. Leadership needed a WMS capable of managing more complex order flows, consolidating operational reporting, supporting a broader range of fulfillment processes, and providing a foundation for future automation investments.

Direct labor tracking was a particular pressure point. With distribution costs under scrutiny, the retailer needed a system that could actively optimize workforce efficiency, not simply record it.



Replacing a deeply embedded, custom-built system is never a straightforward decision. They needed not just a new platform, but a rigorous and objective process to identify the right one. With significant operational continuity at stake across three sites, they engaged Cornerstone Edge to lead the evaluation.



"The right WMS decision isn't about finding the vendor with the flashiest demo, it's about knowing your operation cold before you ever sit down with a vendor. That's what let us cut through 11 platforms and land on the one that actually fit how this team works."

—Brian Carlson, Founder, Cornerstone Edge

SOLUTION

Cornerstone Edge (CE) approached the engagement through its proprietary 3D Methodology—Define, Design, Deliver—starting with a firm commitment to understand the operation before evaluating a single vendor.

In the Define phase, CE conducted in-depth discovery sessions across all distribution centers, producing detailed requirements documentation grounded in how the company actually operates, not how any vendor hoped it would.

CE evaluated 11 WMS platforms using practitioner expertise and CE's proven 3D Methodology. A formal RFI process narrowed the field to six vendors, whose responses were scored against a weighted 25-criteria Decision Matrix spanning functional capability, technical capability, cost, vendor viability, and implementation risk.

Three finalists were invited to deliver scripted, in-person demonstrations tailored specifically to the retailer's processes. CE and the company scored each session jointly. CE also completed two Total Cost of Ownership analyses, an implementation risk assessment, and a high-level ROI projection, giving the company a complete, objective picture before any decision was made.

RESULTS

Following the evaluation, Softeon was selected.

The 5-year Total Cost of Ownership was over \$1M below the next closest finalist. Its unique screen design tool allowed the retailer to replicate familiar workflows, substantially reducing change management risk for warehouse teams. Unlike competing vendors, Softeon demonstrated genuine willingness to modify base code where operationally justified. Its existing partnership with the retailer's labor management system also offered a clean, lower-risk integration path.

34 MONTHS → 20 MONTHS

CE's structured evaluation process cut the projected implementation timeline nearly in half compared to the company's initial internal estimate.

With a projected 5-year ROI of well over 450% driven primarily by labor efficiency gains, the business case was as compelling as the process that produced it.

Cornerstone Edge continues to partner with the retailer through the Deliver phase, translating a well-informed decision into measurable operational results. With the right system in place, this e-commerce retailer is positioned to scale with greater agility, visibility, and control across its fulfillment network.



Cornerstone Edge is an independent supply chain consulting firm that helps operations leaders solve the challenges slowing down their business through creative, custom solutions—never one-size-fits-all. Services include supply chain evaluations, WMS and labor management selection and implementation, facility planning and design, S&OP, 3PL selection, and technology roadmaps. Get in touch with Brian Carlson at cornerstone-edge.com/contact.

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