

## Turning Toward Technology

March 18, 2008

By Evan Clark



Now that fashion companies, in a fit of globalization, have built supply chains that stretch around the world and are designing on several continents at once, they need technology to assist them more than ever.

Joel Lemke, chief executive officer of technology firm Enovia, who had been working on systems used to build airplanes and other goods, is bringing some of his expertise to fashion.

"There are a lot of similarities in a lot of these industries in what you do with the information," said Lemke. "Even though the products are very different, it's still all about the same thing when you get down to some of the processes."

Enovia specializes in product life cycle tools designed to help companies think innovatively by looking at and tracking information on everything from customer requirements, design and manufacturing to what happens to the product when consumers are done with it.

"It's really taking all the data and the information that you have in these various areas and figuring out what to do with it," said Lemke.

Enovia recently took its specialty on the design side of the fashion business and paired it with the sourcing expertise of Zymmetry Inc., another tech company. Linking the two sides

could offer up new ways to understand the business.

John Brislin, president of Zymmetry's U.S. operations, said a common interface can help the sourcing and design functions work better together. Being able to see product development details and supply chain information all at once can be a boost to the bottom line, he said.

"You can take into consideration cost trade-offs and make sure you're ensuring your margin across a collection of things instead of trying to manage those individually on one or two different styles," he said.

Communication between the sourcing side and the design side can also help companies be more adaptive.

"It's not a matter of preventing change," said Brislin. "It's allowing that change to happen in an effective way so that you get that information back and forth and do as much as you possibly can for the merchandising teams."