SALSIFY | **A.shford**

▌CASE STUDY

How Ashford Wound Up with Big Watch Wins by Centralizing and Managing Content

Luxury Watch Discounter Replaced Legacy Systems to Tackle Data Challenges

Ashford has been wrapping wrists with luxury timepieces for over a decade: founded in 2007 with headquarters on New York City's prestigious 5th Avenue, the ecommerce company purchases large quantities of new and pre-owned inventory from brands such as Rolex, Movado and Hamilton for resale. Now owned by wholesale jewelry distributor Mont d'Or, Ashford continues to lead the online luxury discount watch industry, offering delivery to over 120 countries.

However, old, outdated legacy systems made it time-consuming and frustrating to post images and product details. It was becoming untenable for an ecommerce company with over 50,000 SKUs and distribution on its own website as well as through eBay, Amazon and CJ Affiliates, an affiliate marketplace. According to Ching Ng, Business Solutions Analyst at Ashford.com, the company knew it was time for digital transformation that could take its business to the next level.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Problem: With an old, slow, locally-hosted legacy PIM and DAM, it took two weeks to get products to market online.

Solution: Ashford needed a nimble and fast product management system to ensure its product content was complete, up-to-date, uploaded properly and syndicated efficiently.

Results: With Salsify, Ashford was able to

 Reduce time to market from 2 weeks to 24 to 48 hours

 Increase SKUs from 50,000 products in the old PIM to 60,000+ and counting (with over 4,000 for sale at any given time)

 Boost the number of images from 82,000 to 124,000+ (51%)

The Challenge: Complex content process, cumbersome legacy systems

When consumers buy a luxury watch, they demand a tremendous amount of detailed product information. But with many thousands of SKUs, a constantly-shifting inventory and manually-entered product data not supplied by brands, this was a massive challenge.

At Ashford, the race to post content begins once a purchase order has been created. But the luxury watch brands don't provide the company with product data; instead, staffers actually take the watch off the shelves, physically inspect the product and then enter the data. The legacy system they used was locally-hosted, outdated, unstable and frustratingly slow —magnifying the challenge. "It was very cumbersome to work with," says Ching. "It would be normal for the process to take up to two weeks from the time the warehouse got it to the time it was available to purchase live."

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> *Ching Ng, Business Solutions Analyst at Ashford.com*

In addition, each ecommerce partner selling Ashford products, from Amazon and eBay to affiliate partners, has different image and text requirements. "You can imagine that with so many partners and integrations, this is a huge challenge," he says. "Also, we wanted to use product data for marketing, such as to through an email marketing platform, but it would take weeks to even do an export and information wouldn't sync properly."

The Approach: Flexible, automated product experience management

Salsify was a game-changer for Ashford, offering the speed, flexibility, and efficiency needed to handle such a large number of images with varying categories and requirements. The digital photography team now creates images of each watch from a half-dozen angles, imports it once into Salsify and an automated process creates every image, at every size, required by every partner.
Now, Ching was also able to restructure how product data is entered into Salsify. "We could clean up our existing data because it was all over the place in our old system," he says. "Now everything is solid."

Finally, Salsify was there with the right support, which was sorely lacking with the out-of-date version of the legacy system Ashford struggled with. "Now we get the answers to the questions we need," says Ching. If a feature doesn't appear to be available, chances are there is a workaround or a lab being created. "For example, we set up a feed to our email management system so that when a price changes in Salsify it is automatically updated."

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The Results: Faster time to market, greater number of SKUs

Thanks to Salsify, it now only takes 24 to 48 hours for Ashford to move from receiving luxury watches to uploading images to Salsify and publishing them. The error rate, which brand managers had constantly complained about, is consistently down to zero.

As a result, the number of SKUs Ashford can handle has boomed: Previously, it had been around 50,000, but now the company boasts 60,000 SKUs with 4,000 to 5,000 actually in stock. There are also thousands of more images available -- that number has risen over 50% since installing Salsify, to over 124,000 images.

Now, if Ashford wants to work with new vendors and build feeds, the turnaround time is fast and the implementation is flexible, says Ching: "Even for the custom stuff it's been super-fast, thanks to Salsify support. There's a real effort being put in to always be making the product better."

To learn more about Salsify, visit **www.salsify.com** or send an email to info@salsify.com

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