

AKIRA Builds Digital Roadmap for BOPIS and Omnichannel Customer Experience

AKIRA
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Overview

AKIRA, a women's boutique with full-line of women's clothing with 40 stores across North America and a DTC channel.

Company Size

~\$100 mil in annual revenue

Location

IL, USA

Industry

Fashion, Retail

Employees

500

AKIRA's legacy architecture was a barrier for omnichannel experience.

AKIRA, a women's boutique with full-line of women's clothing, footwear, and accessories including private labels with over 40 stores across North America and a DTC channel was seeking to explore new business models such as buy-online-pickup-in-store and buy-in-store-ship-to-home. But their existing architecture and fragmented systems prevented them to have the omnichannel experience that today's consumers expect.

AKIRA engaged with ElevatIQ to build as-is and to-be process models for the next inflection point, create business, process, data, and system architecture, as well as consensus among executive teams.

Executive Summary

Through ElevatIQ's proven methodology, AKIRA was able to build the digital roadmap including detailed process

models in the as-is and to-be architecture. Within two weeks, the executive teams had a better understanding of how the new business models would flow through the process boundaries and impact each department.

With 80% of the functions such as merchandizing, planning, procurement, AR, and AP residing on spreadsheets, the new architecture would result into the potential savings of over \$1 mil in reduced admin efforts and 20% revenue lift.

Automated Procurement	
Better Omnichannel Experience	✓
BOPIS and ROPIS Business Models	✓
Reliable Business Analytics	



The fast fashion world coupled with a private company that has grown too big too quickly and has too many manual processes. This process has helped has given us a lot to think.

Christine Chung

Chief Administrative Officer, AKIRA

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The Challenge

A fashion retailer, AKIRA, grew too quickly with over 40 stores and a new DTC channel. While they don't manufacture their products and primarily procure from Asian countries, their business model is unique.

The biggest challenge with their business model is that each product is unique and custom-tailored, creating a new style code and SKU. Their system landscape consisted of an Apparel-centric OMS with an integrated CRM, as well as a home-grown WMS system. But accounting was completely siloed while procurement, planning, AR, and AP being managed on spreadsheets. Their eCommerce system, Magento, was completely disconnected from the OMS layer, which created additional challenges in implementing newer business model with unified commerce experience such as BOPIS and ROPIS.

Siloed systems and processes resulted into fragmented customer experience.

- ✓ New problem? New integration point → patchy customer experience.
- ✓ Shiny technologies such as Snowflake, no business results.
- ✓ 80% of the business processes outside of the systems.
- ✓ Operational capacity challenge with fragmented architecture.

The Solution

After a brief review, ElevatiQ team proposed a process audit to understand their architectural and business model issues. It became quickly apparent that the existing systems and processes would not provide unified commerce experience.

The major change proposed were to reduce the system footprint and replace with new ones: an ERP, a PLM, and an S&OP. Along with a series of process reengineering changes.

What was causing omnichannel issues?

Several factors such as fragmented loyalty kept between the disconnected eCommerce, CRM, and OMS system. Allocation and inventory algorithm kept inside the WMS layer. No seamless handshake among systems for omnichannel transactions.

Why

were these changes recommended?

The biggest driver for unified experience is always the centralized view of the master data across channels. As well as how each channel will be interacting with the master data. The core pillars of master data would be the customers, vendors, but most importantly products and inventory.

The integrated ERP and PLM were to help process 80% of the transaction through the central operational layer while keeping the existing OMS layer, primarily for order capture and store fulfilment. The eCommerce platform, Magento, was primarily the extension of the OMS layer, enabling the omnichannel experience between stores and eCommerce layer.

Potential Revenue Lift

>20%

Because of the newer business models and Cx improvements.

Potential Total Savings

>\$1M

By avoiding duplicate admin efforts and siloed processes.

Opportunity Costs Savings

>70%

Reduced the time of internal team members including AKIRA executives.

Why It Was a Success

ElevatiQ’s industry expertise with retail and DTC brands helped them understand the business – at the transaction level – within a week. They were also able to quickly identify the processes that needed to be reengineered for the new business model. As well as any systems and technology that would be required to enable such an experience.

ElevatiQ’s familiarity with systems such as Magento, Teamwork OMS, Snowflake, QuickBooks, Concur, and ShipStation helped them quickly draw the revised roles and responsibilities of each system in the to-be system architecture. Their deep understanding of retail business helped them build rapport with most executives and prepare change management plan.



We enjoyed the process with your team. – it’s all a lot. But there’s good progress and it’s good exercise for the team.

Christine Chung

Chief Administrative Officer, AKIRA

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ElevatiQ’s equal depth with business and technology helped in defining the digital roadmap that was eye-opening for most AKIRA’s executives

ElevatiQ’s depth with buy vs build analysis helped reduce the scope of the overly bloated home-grown systems such as WMS and Analytics data warehouse built on Snowflake. ElevatiQ was able to draw out the flows in both as-is and to-be architecture in how the processes such as allocation would need to be moved to the ERP. As well as how the WMS needs to be reduced in the scope and integrated in real-time with the ERP. Incorporation of new processes such as ASN and license plate numbers helped gain traction with Supply Chain executives as these initiatives were on their radar. But they lacked the implementation expertise.

	As-is	To-be
 Consensus among executive teams	✗	✓
 Unified commerce experience with premium offerings enabled through technology	✗	✓
 Existing systems and investments retained in the new architecture	✓	✓
 Duplicate data entry required across multiple systems and omnichannel issues	✓	✗
 Documented cross-functional business processes and their impact on users	✗	✓

About ElevatiQ

ElevatiQ is an independent ERP and digital transformation consulting firm, with the focus on ERP selection, contract negotiation, business process reengineering and design. As well as enterprise and multi-system architecture, growth enablement strategy and documentation, and business case development. Plus, business model transformation strategy, change management, ERP project recoveries, ERP project management, and ERP implementations. With over 1000 ERP selection engagements and over 200 successful ERP implementations, ElevatiQ is uniquely positioned to build the digital process architecture for the next phase of your growth.

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