Navigating COVID-19: How Stitch Fix is adapting to the new normal

In the first installment of our 'Doing More With Less' series, we highlight the creative strategies employed by our customers on the Stitch Fix creative operations team as they manage workflows remotely and prioritize shared access to data.

Undeniably, this global pandemic has fundamentally shifted the way we work, communicate, and live. As companies navigate the COVID-19 crisis, we wanted to learn how teams can adapt to new ways of working that enable continued productivity. Today, we'd like to highlight some best practices that Stitch Fix has adopted and explored in hopes that this may help others ensure business continuity in this challenging time.

Enable new levels of data transparency

Before the COVID-19 crisis, the Studio team at Stitch Fix operated exclusively out of a physical studio space, shooting and retouching product imagery with product workflows tied to on-location (and to an on-prem production server). As those who worked pre-production through post-production workflows were forced to work remotely in just a matter of a few days, they faced a critical problem: with limited access to the studio and on-prem server, how could they maintain the content post-production and creation process?

To avoid disruption to the creative workflow, the team moved quickly to reconfigure on-prem workflows to be more in tune with a cloud-based configuration that opened up broader upload accessibility to the same content repository for photographers, retouchers, and external partners —wherever they were working. Streamlined editorial shoots could still happen with photographers and influencers provisioned to upload photos, videos, and metadata for retouchers to then process and deliver. Retouchers shifted to managing their queues in the application rather than on the production server. Empowering teams to collaborate and continue their day-to-day work from home ensured minimal disruption to the content creation and curation process.

Having a content repository application in place was the central pillar of support that made this all possible. This enabled continual processing of new content and ensured that all content was enriched with relevant data, such as product information or tags, so that team members could remotely access what they needed quickly.

Reuse and recycle asset

With a strong, searchable content repository, the Stitch Fix creative teams were able to curate a source of unused or lightly-used content. They were able to remotely access this treasure trove of unused content quickly, understand usage rights, seasonality, performance and, most importantly, have fresh content to use, during a time when limited options for creating new content in-studio were available.

Exploring new sources of content

Adapting at a breakneck speed, the Creative Ops team has also been exploring other creative avenues for generating fresh content that extends beyond the physical studio. For example, working with collaborators and influencers to tap into content that is relatable and timely. Expanding access for influencers, models, and external partners to contribute photography and video into Stitch Fix's asset database offers interesting opportunities to develop novel, creative assets. Having access to those images and data about those images is critical in getting the most out of the content.

If there's any silver lining to the current COVID-19 pandemic for Stitch Fix, it's that it has unlocked new opportunities for managing and creating content in innovative ways.