

CUSTOMIZED FOOTWEAR: HOW TO SELECT AND IMPLEMENT THE RIGHT SOLUTIONS

SERGIO DULIO

The application of the mass customization paradigm to footwear has been a topic of discussion among practitioners and of academic research for quite a while; research projects, scientific and technical papers, books have been dedicated to the benefits, both for the consumers and the shoe producers related to adoption of this innovative business approach, touching several aspects from how to take into consideration consumers' behaviours to how to choose the appropriate enabling technologies. The aim of the proposed paper is to deliver first hand indications on how to select and implement the most adequate technologies in the so called "front end", i.e. in the shop, retail outlet or first point of contact with the consumer. A survey of the most important building blocks of the front end solutions will be presented, together with a detailed analysis of the most important factors to be taken into consideration to ensure that this initial very important step of the customization process is preformed in the most effective and suitable way. Some recent cases of actual implementations of mass customization projects for various typologies of shoes will also be presented and commented.