Fashion Forward Timebomb Trading Delivers Popular Clothing and Lifestyle Brands to Canada from Across the World, Streamlines Operations with Acumatica

OVERVIEW

Exclusive fashion and apparel distributor Timebomb Trading helps trendy and adventurous apparel products reach Canadians, acting as the brands' back-office operations. But as Timebomb grew, its legacy financial system couldn't keep up with the increased transactions. Timebomb Trading deployed Acumatica Cloud ERP, gaining a seamless connection to its multiple Shopify sites and its B2B platform serving more than 500 retailers, which streamlined the company's operations and allowed it to avoid adding headcount and provide a future-proof platform for growth.

KEY RESULTS

- Gained a single, connected business application that streamlined data sharing across Shopify web stores, EasyPost, and B2B Platform Elastic
- Established ability to work from anywhere, increasing sales productivity, freeing staff for more high-value work to grow sales
- Optimized and improved communication, consolidating information in one place, eliminating the need for Google Docs
- Avoided frequent work disruption and per-user licensing limitations and costs, gaining an unlimited user platform with access for all employees
- Eliminated manual data entry work including shipping information like tracking numbers, and inventory SKU product creation that avoided the need to hire additional staff
- Automated Product Matrix Generator, increasing the selling window and saving time
- Accessed real-time data, speeding decision making

CHALLENGES

Some of the most fashion-forward, outdoor and adventure-seeking and action sports-performance lifestyle clothing brands trek to Timebomb Trading when they want to better reach the Canadian consumer market. The company has built a stellar reputation for not only distributing apparel but operating Canadian-based online stores and promoting the items with savvy marketing programs and social media campaigns. Timebomb further brings to the table expertise in sales, brick-and-mortar retail, e-Commerce strengths, marketing, event planning, third party logistics, customer service, and manufacturing capabilities.

Timebomb Trading holds exclusive distribution agreements with its apparel brands, many of whom are sought after by millennials or those with a thirst for adventure, such as Stance socks, Roark apparel, Rumple blankets, and Topo Designs, among others. Distributing and servicing such a wide variety of exclusive brands requires agility, exceptional customer service, and the flexibility to react quickly in the fast-moving, ever-changing performance apparel and fashion industry.

For decades, Timebomb Trading ran its operations using a legacy, on-premises Sage ERP system that struggled to keep up with the times. Its trusted IT partner had created a multitude of customizations over the years to bridge the gap of disconnected software applications the company used to operate the business.

Those systems included Shopify an eCommerce solution it used to run its nine branded e-commerce sites; Elastic, a B2B platform it used so that 500 Canadian retailers could pre-order the branded apparel as new lines were released; and EasyPost, its shipping software. But those third-party applications were not connected to its financial system and data had to be manually imported and exported between systems.

Company
Timebomb Trading
https://timebombtrading.com

Industry
Wholesale Distribution: Fashion and Apparel, Retail, e-Commerce

Number of Employees
Approx. 60 full time employees

Location
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

Products
Acumatica Distribution Edition with:
- Warehouse Management
- Shopify Connector
- EasyPost Shipping Integration
- B2B Commerce Platform Integration to Elastic

Customer Social Sharing Details

www.linkedin.com/company/timebombtrading

www.facebook.com/timebombtrading

www.instagram.com/timebombtrading

www.twitter.com/timebombtrading

Partner Details

THE ANSWER COMPANY

The Answer Company
www.theanswerco.com

In addition, as transactions scaled, the legacy system wasn't stable, often crashed, and at times took days to restore, which meant the online stores were closed, says Lester Yuen, vice president. "It was a good system for us in the beginning, but it was not cloud-based, and we learned that the legacy Sage product was being discontinued and they would no longer be servicing it."

"There was no service if anything happened so we couldn't fix it, and we had to buy and maintain additional servers when it ran slowly," he adds. "There was no more customization we could do, and we still had to upload tracking numbers manually."

Inventory was only updated hourly, which was problematic when high-demand items ran out of stock within that timeframe. Company employees also had to manually enter thousands of new SKUs every three to four weeks ahead of each upcoming season and fashion line release only to change them out as they became discontinued.

In addition, it was hard to track orders appropriately. Timebomb sells and distributes the branded products in three ways:

- Retailers pre-book orders through Elastic, a B2B platform that comes with its own proprietary data formatting requirement
- Consumers in Canada make purchases through its numerous branded Shopify webstore sites
- Orders flow through Timebomb's own limited online store

Because it had only purchased a limited number of per-seat licenses for the legacy ERP, executives had to manage users in the system, asking some to log out so others could perform their work, which wasted time and disrupted employees' workdays.

SOLUTION

In addition to needing a stable, cloud-based ERP that would allow employees to work from anywhere, Timebomb executives wanted an all-in-one solution that connected disparate systems, eliminated tedious and time-consuming manual data entry, and streamlined communications and operations across the business.

Timebomb Trading executives narrowed their ERP selection options to Oracle NetSuite and Acumatica Cloud ERP, selecting Acumatica for its unique pricing model, which gives all employees access and the platform's flexibility and openness for integrations. Acumatica's Distribution Edition includes order fulfillment, shipping, financial analysis, reporting, and inventory tracking all within one platform, uniting eCommerce website(s) with the back-office application at last.

"We were very comfortable with Acumatica because of the history we already had with our IT Partner in The Answer Company who had supported us in the past and knew our business. It's also great that The Answer Company operates in Canada and knows about the uniqueness of our market, which just makes everything easier," says Yuen.

"We needed something that we could personalize to our business needs," he adds. "The implementation went really well."

BENEFITS

When the pandemic hit, Timebomb Trading was still operating on its legacy ERP, which was not cloud-based. No one could work from home. With Acumatica, all employees have secure access from anywhere via a simple web browser.

Outside sales reps that previously had to call the main office to get information no longer do so. They simply access the Acumatica platform on the go and instantly see the information needed in real-time. They instantly view retail purchases, which account has what on order, and what apparel is available to sell with accompanying accurate inventory counts.

Shopify and EasyPost connect seamlessly to Acumatica, which has eliminated the need for staff to manually transfer data between systems and for Timebomb to hire data entry clerks. Customers purchasing from the branded Shopify sites are automatically sent tracking numbers, which has improved customer satisfaction.

"The Shopify connector has simplified the process," says Yuen. "We don't have to touch anything, it updates every three second. It's a very big improvement."

> " Fashion tastes and trends evolve very quickly, so being fast to respond and agile as a business is key. We need to get data in and out at rapidly to meet and get ahead of the market to remain an industry leader in our category. "
>
> —Lester Yuen, Vice President of Operations and Finance, Timebomb Trading Inc

Smooth Connection Developed to B2B platform, Elastic

Timebomb struggled to connect Elastic, its B2B platform used by its retailers, which are the bulk of its business, to Sage for two years. "Elastic needs data in its own format, and Acumatica is flexible and able to do that. The integration is so slick and such a smooth process making it a big win," Yuen says. "We tried for two years with MAS 500 and in just three months on Acumatica, it's running 100 percent better than before."

Because retailer pre-orders automatically flow from Elastic to Acumatica, "we can publish our order form earlier and leave it there later, which maximizes our selling time. As a distributor, we know that adds not only our bottom line but the brands we serve as well, making everyone happy," Yuen says.

Overall, Timebomb Trading is more efficient and does more with less. "Everyone's workload has seen improvements and the work is much less manual than before," Yuen says.

Automated Item Generator Matrix

Timebomb Trading handles thousands of new products every season and previously all those items were entered manually into its multiple systems. Now Timebomb generates thousands of SKUs at the click of a button, which eliminated the need to add additional employees to manually enter 10,000 to 20,000 new items, saving money for the fast-growing distributor.

Prioritized Inventory

The company can now prioritize its inventory and see it in real-time, allowing it to perform bulk allocation on its stock based on retailer preferences so its customers get the products they request. That functionality helps retailers better plan for the new inventory and gives them confidence, making them more likely to consider additional lines and apparel products Timebomb brings their way. The Answer Company, with its experienced development team, also instituted a solution to reserve stock for its e-commerce web stores in a virtual warehouse to ensure items wouldn't be diverted from the main warehouse accidentally.

Bring on Trend-Setting Fashion Partners and Lines is a Snap

Timebomb Trading is now focused on creating a personalized user interface and dashboards in Acumatica to help the team keep track of incoming shipments along with any other information they need to view regularly, Yuen says. The company previously shared information using Google Docs as a collaboration tool, a system that didn't work well if employees didn't check the outside site or refresh it regularly.

"Now that everyone is using Acumatica, it's one place to go to do their job," he says. "It's made a big improvement having all that information in one platform, no more digging around wondering if the data is correct."

Timebomb executives have gained peace of mind and no longer worry about the security and reliability of the system since Acumatica is hosted in the cloud and provides automatic backups. "I don't have to worry about being hacked or a ransomware attack, which was a concern previously when we hosted everything on-site on our own," Yuen says.

When Timebomb Trading executives decide to bring on additional brands and partners, they are confident Acumatica will help them do it quickly and efficiently, Yuen says. "If we pick up two or three brands tomorrow, we won't have to worry about the technology aspect one bit. We simply add warehouse and manpower capacity and we are good to go."

"Change is the only constant in life," espoused the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus who could have been talking straight to today's fashion and apparel industry where consumer demand and omnichannel shopping expectations are ever-increasing.

"In Canada and around the world, fashion tastes and trends evolve very quickly, so being fast to respond and agile as a business is key," Yuen says. "We need to get data in and out quickly and have the ability to meet and get ahead of the market to remain an industry leader in our category."