HONEYBEE GARDENS

Clean
Fashionable
Fun
Affordable

HONEYBEE GARDENS

Case Study

How a kitchen-lab experiment came to be an international enterprise business.

Honeybee Gardens, a cruelty-free, all-natural, organic cosmetics and skin care company, produces some of the finest herbal skin care and cosmetic products available. The company has come a long way from what originally started as a kitchen-lab experiment for an aftershave that wouldn't irritate the skin. Here's how Melissa Buckley—owner, author and herbalist—eventually turned her three-year side hobby into an international enterprise business.

In 1995, Melissa had six products and was advertising on the back of herb magazines. When the website was launched in 1998, Honeybee Gardens became available to the world and Melissa was finally able to give herself a salary and leave her full-time corporate job.

"I remember I would check my mailbox and get so excited to see an order. Now we get so many orders a day, it's funny to think back to those times," she recalls. Now in business for more than 20 years, Honeybee Gardens is an enterprise company with more than 50 employees, 130 products, and multiple sales channels.

In 2004, Honeybee Gardens expanded beyond skin care and entered into the cosmetics industry. Having an e-commerce presence made them more aware of what products were available in the market and exposed an increased need for fun and fashionable natural cosmetics. That is when Melissa seized the opportunity to create her own line of high-quality cosmetics in a wide range of colors and attractive packaging that women would actually enjoy using.

21% Retail (strictly e-commerce and has the largest number of orders)

4% International Sales

24% Direct-to-Store located in the Southeastern United States

51% Large Distributors

Honeybee Gardens
Industry: Cosmetics
Founded: 1995

Problem: Needed to expand online sales to multiple shopping platforms while automating data entry and integration between accounting and shopping cart software.

Solution: Webgility automates data entry that used to require two full-time employees to complete and makes it painless for the company to expand.

Expanding the product base boosted e-commerce sales.

The investment worked, and paying attention to the need for fashion in the natural cosmetic market increased their sales and brand profile. Eventually the majority of their e-commerce sales came from their cosmetics line. But with the explosion of their business, they soon maxed out their database on QuickBooks Pro and upgraded to QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions.

"QuickBooks Enterprise does everything we need it to do, and it's not overkill for us. We get the reporting requirements that we need to run our business effectively, and we can manage our day-to-day operations easily using that software," said Melissa

Before making the switch to Bigcommerce and Webgility, there were several inefficient manual processes that created data errors and took a great deal of time. There was no integration between their previous e-commerce platform (Miva Merchant) and QuickBooks. "The online order would come over but the product codes didn't map to what we had listed in QuickBooks, so I had to manually update the codes so they would coincide with our inventory," explained Lisa Grotewiel, office manager at Honeybee Gardens.

"There are four people in the e-commerce department managing our largest number of orders. The Webgility solution streamlines our work."

"Miva Merchant wasn't linked to any kind of shipping system either," she said. "We had to manually enter shipping address information to print shipping labels and then manually print the packing slips."

The entire process just to process the paperwork alone took about five minutes per order.

"We needed something that was going to make our lives a lot easier."

Melissa realized there were options that would work better and provide more efficiency when Honeybee Gardens underwent a website redesign. Melissa looked up different e-commerce service options and found that Bigcommerce and Webgility worked really well together, had great reviews, and no customer complaints. She also felt the two companies offered the flexibility she wanted for Honeybee Gardens. So they reached out to learn more about the Webgility solutions, and were floored by the attention to detail customer service provided.

Setup was easier and smoother than expected.

"Before we were even a Webgility customer, they walked us through everything. They customized the demo to our business and showed what the software would do and how it could help us," said Lisa. Honeybee Gardens implemented Webgility in November 2013 while setting up their online store on Bigcommerce. Once their Bigcommerce store was finished in 2014, they dropped Miva Merchant.

Though they were wary that going from one order management system to another could mean a lot of down time and transfer errors, they were pleasantly surprised to find that wasn't an issue at all. The setup of Webgility only took Onboarding Team one day to get everything set up and integrated.

With Webgility's direct data integration across the different applications, they used to record financial data and order information, Honeybee Gardens was able to dramatically increase data accuracy across the board, saving time and money. Even their shipping staff, who were most resistant to change, really liked how the software enabled them to work more efficiently.

"You can't run our business with incorrect data in QuickBooks. You're making key critical decisions based on that data so it better be right."

And with Webgility's shipping feature, their UPS and Stamps.com accounts were also integrated with Bigcommerce and QuickBooks.

Now the shipping staff can automatically download the orders, print shipping labels, and print packing slips with all the order information included.

"It's great for us, because all of the information is attached to the order. If customers call us about their orders, we can just give them the tracking information. Webgility brought all that information into QuickBooks and we don't have to go and dig for the data," said Melissa.

Data entry for 100 orders before Webgility: 8 hours

Data entry for 100 orders after Webgility: 50 minutes

Webgility has dramatically improved how Honeybee Gardens runs their e-commerce operations and overall business. They're able to save time and money through automation, have more accurate inventory management, and get more visibility into their financials.

Work Saved

Before Webgility, with all the manual data entry work that had to be done for each order took five minutes. Now? 30 seconds.

On promotion days when they'd get over 100 orders, it would have taken them more than eight hours to process the orders. Now it takes them less than one hour.

Inventory Accuracy

BeforeWebgility, it was difficult keeping track of inventory across the sales channels due to the manual updates and data entry in QuickBooks. Now using one set of data, they have accurate inventory. This allows them to plan ahead and restock quickly to avoid overselling.

"When an order comes over through Webgility, the inventory is automatically depleted in QuickBooks. We do purchase orders to replenish inventory every week," said Lisa.

Up-to-date Reports in QuickBooks

With five-user access to their QuickBooks company file, there's always someone viewing the reports at least once a week, and sometimes daily. So having accurate, up-to-date data in QuickBooks is vital.

Being in the competitive and ever-changing fashion and beauty industry, it's critical to stay on top of the market trends. Now Honeybee Gardens can break down their sales by items, customers, and sales channels. They can see which products are trending and which products need more marketing and promotions. "Webgility allows us to grow product lines to meet the demands in the fash-ion industry. And it allows Lisa to manage the company more effectively because she can easily look at the reports and make necessary changes to optimize the business," said Melissa.

"We chose Webgility because they took the extra time to do the research and give us a demonstration that fit our needs."

We'd be happy to show you how our solution can help you simplify and scale your business as well.

Schedule Your Free Trial of Webgility.

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