

Case Study

Art and Culture Bonsai: Nurturing Growth

Industry: Specialty gardening

ERP: Acoma

k·ecommerce.
powered by **mdf commerce**





When Marie-Josée Gélinas offered her husband Louis a little bonsai tree for Valentine's Day back in 2000, it was a first for both of them.

And, as is the case with many beginners, the tree almost died.

But they managed to keep it alive, and the following summer, they took an introductory course offered by local business. When they'd finished that course, they took several workshops. Every time they enrolled in a new class, they had to travel all over to far-flung locations in order to find the tools and accessories needed to practice the art of bonsai.

At this time, Marie-Josée had been working at the same place for twelve years and was looking for a new challenge. Louis, meanwhile, learned that the factory where he was employed would be closing in another ten years.

Their far-ranging search for bonsai supplies gave them the idea to start a business to service the region. Art and Culture Bonsai was born.

So they rented a spot in a local nursery, and for the next 12 years, the couple grew their business alongside work and other projects, gradually spending more time on it as revenues increased. Their first website launched as a personal page for the business in 2005. In 2007, they invested in a professional website, but didn't yet have an online store. This would come with a redesign of the website in 2009.





The Challenge

That first web store was a customized build that allowed them to take orders. However, it had no integration to their accounting software.

This meant that every time an order came in, Marie-Josée or Louis had to copy all the order information over to the accounting software. Once they had invoiced the order, they had to copy the invoice back into the web store.

Similarly, they had to update inventory and customer information in both systems. Whenever they made a change to their pricing, this had to be entered carefully as well, and double checked to avoid any potentially expensive copy errors.

Small companies often struggle with business data management for this reason. Copying all this information can be time-consuming even with a dedicated, full-time staff. And the more sales that come in, the more time it takes to properly enter all the data.

But for Marie-Josée and Louis, this was a part-time operation, which made the lack of integration an even bigger challenge for their business.

“ *All web transactions had to be manually re-entered in our accounting software, in addition to manual inventory management.* ”

Business Owner,
Art and Culture Bonsai

Automated
order and
invoice entry

Real-time
inventory
management

Streamlined
accounting
process

Saved
time and
eliminated
errors

The Solution

When they switched to an ERP-integrated e-commerce solution in 2013, Art and Culture Bonsai was able to drastically reduce the amount of time spent copying orders and invoices back and forth and maintaining business data across two systems.

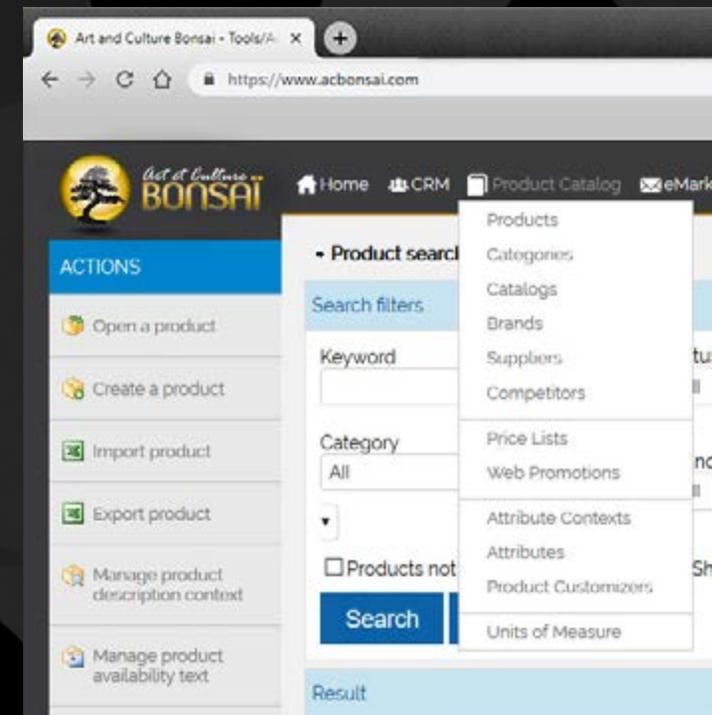
ERP integration allowed Art and Culture Bonsai's web store and ERP to communicate directly, sharing product, price, customer, and tax data in real time. Orders placed in the web store were transmitted directly, saving time and eliminating the possibility of error.

Even with larger companies, ERP integration has been shown to free up as much as 20% of the staff's time every week by automating routine data entry tasks.

In Art and Culture Bonsai's case, between real-time inventory management, simple non-duplicate invoicing, and virtually instant order processing, the whole accounting process was streamlined and they were able to focus more on growing their business.

“*k-ecommerce is easy to use. We assemble our products in Excel and then import them into the catalogue with all the information filled in a single operation.*”

Marie-Josée Gélinas,
Business Owner,
Art and Culture Bonsai





Revenue growth of
15%
per year

Reached
international
markets

Increased
web order
volume

The Results

Growth has been steady and sweet. Every year since opening, Marie-Josée and Louis have increased their orders and revenue by about 15% per year. They've even been able to move their business out of the nursery and into their own building.

But in terms of sales, just over the past 2 years their in-store orders have been declining more and more in favor of web store sales. They continually receive positive feedback from their customers both about the visual aspects of the site and its intuitive, user-friendly customer experience.

Thanks to their ERP-integrated k-eCommerce solution, this increased web order volume is no challenge for Marie-Josée and Louis. The time and money they've freed up in eliminating manual entry has allowed them to expand their business even further.

Their company now also acts as a wholesaler in the field of tools and accessories related to the art of bonsai. They import these products themselves from Asian countries like Korea as well as the United States.

“ We have reached new markets, even international ones. Our web sales are constantly increasing. We are very satisfied with our choice. ”

Marie-Josée Gélinas,
Business Owner,
Art and Culture Bonsai



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