

CASE STUDY

GREATS: Then and Now

Three Years Later: GREATS grows 280% year-over-year

A few years after our initial conversation with GREATS Founder & CEO, we followed up to learn how the company has managed its record growth.



Flashback to 2013. Brooklyn-based footwear brand, GREATS, launched a beta version of its ecommerce store, offering two silhouettes of luxury men's shoes. After selling out, they went back into production and made an official debut in 2014. Their focus is direct-to-consumer ecommerce, a strategy that enables them to run lean and offer customers lower-than-expected prices on a high-end product.

GREATS partnered with Ingram Micro Commerce & Lifecycle Services right from the beginning. "We knew that when we launched, logistics was not something that we were going to be good at, so we went out immediately and tried to find the best 3PL that we could find," said Ryan Babenzien, founder and CEO. Having seen Ingram Micro Services scale to accommodate large volumes for other customers, they were sure they could get there, too.

We spoke to GREATS in 2014 and since then, the company has grown astronomically. Sales have grown an average of 280 percent year-over-year. Between 2014 and 2015, order volume increased over 300 percent. By 2016, the company was averaging over 3,000 orders per month. As for 2017, early data indicates a record-breaking year.

"We have all the right influencers promoting our stuff. Things are great," said Ryan. GREATS' strategy is true to its roots — the team continues to design high-end shoes and sells them at a value price online — but they're continuing to build their brand image, broadening their product offering and exploring the idea of retail. "We're testing a women's line now," said Ryan. "We thought we'd stick to men's, but we just couldn't ignore the demand any longer."

Fueling growth with new products managed through the Shipwire Platform

GREATS has grown from two to 12 silhouettes in less than four years and has leveraged brand-building partnerships with the likes of football star, Marshawn Lynch, and global retailer, Mr. Porter.

Shoes ship from Ingram Micro Services' Memphis location and SKU attributes include style, size and color. Adding an additional layer of complexity, GREATS operates on a bi-weekly release schedule that includes seasonal styles and collaborations, resulting in a rotating product mix.

To manage inventory, GREATS relies on the Shipwire Platform, which integrates with key technologies to provide real-time visibility over their SKUs and orders. "There isn't a day that goes by that we don't interact with the platform. It gives us the flexibility to be really nimble and make changes on the fly," said Ryan. With the ability to add new products quickly, check inventory levels, monitor returns, pull business reports and more, GREATS gets the control and insight they need to continue building a successful business.

Enhancing customer experience with branded packaging

As a "digitally native" brand, the package that arrives at customer's door is very often GREATS' only physical touchpoint with a shopper. As a company who has said "brand is everything," the delivery experience matters — a lot.

GREATS has embraced personalization options available through the Shipwire Platform since their early days. Things like customized shipping confirmation emails allowed them to connect with customers more intimately. And as the brand has matured, so has their customer experience. GREATS and Ingram Micro Services worked together to implement branded packing lists and custom boxes, resulting in a luxury delivery experience that leaves a lasting impression on customers and boldly communicates the feeling of quality.

Integrity and quality are pillars of GREATS' brand image, and as the company grows, it's more important than ever to maintain and push standards.

Partnerships and target audience

The GREATS team has proven its skill in brand building and the road ahead promises to keep them busy. A women's line means a new audience and market, strategic partnerships continue to be forged and new teammates may indicate new opportunities and areas of growth.

As business gets busier, GREATS can rely on Ingram Micro Services to keep pace and maintain the same flexibility and user-friendly technology that's always been offered. "Our demand continues to grow, and without a great logistics partner you just simply can't do that (support growth)," Ryan said. "We try to work with best-in-class in whatever we do, and I think that's why we're really happy with our service."



Why Ingram Micro Services:

- 280% YOY sales growth since its launch in 2014
- SKU count multiplied six-fold and includes a new women's line
- Leveraging new customization capabilities to strengthen customer experience