



WEBGILITY

CASE STUDY

EPIC MENS



Webgility helped this premium menswear retailer launch on the right foot—ensuring operational efficiency and maximum profitability from the start

A Webgility Case Study



“We’re now able to easily sync price and inventory between the storefronts and QuickBooks.”

Shen Li got his first taste of running an ecommerce operation a little over 20 years ago with the tech company he was working for at the time. “It was the mid-90s when I led the launch of my company’s direct-to-consumer e-business store, and I could see then that’s where things were heading,” says Li. Years later, after sensing an opening in the online men’s apparel market, he decided to launch his own ecommerce business. “I saw this opportunity where high-quality products like these were very hard to find online. To get the better, more premium brands, you had to go to a brick-and-mortar store. There was a gap for the higher-end consumer that would prefer the convenience of shopping online.” That’s when Li conceived of Epic Mens.

FAST FACTS

- » **Founded:** 2010
- » **Edition:** Webgility
- » **Based:** Cupertino, CA
- » **Orders:** 1000-5000/month
- » **Platforms:** QB Enterprise, Shopify, Amazon, eBay

Business Overview

Li started Epic Mens in 2010, to sell men's clothing and accessories online for work, home, and formal occasions. "We offer high quality, premium brands, typically sold at upscale department stores and men's specialty stores," says Li.

Epic Mens first started selling on its own website (epicmens.com), and that site remains at the center of its business. "Epicmens.com is really our flagship channel. That's where we truly showcase our brands and products. We also, fairly shortly afterwards, expanded into other marketplaces, and we're currently selling on Amazon and eBay as well," says Li. "Now we're making plans to launch on a couple of other sites soon, so stay tuned."

"I never really have to worry about Webgility—it just works."

"Our strategy has always been to sell where customers want to buy. And we know the trend has been steadily shifting from shopping at brick-and-mortar stores to online. So, basically, the decision to open our online store was primarily driven by that change in preference. As customers got more and more comfortable buying online, we were confident this market would expand," says Li. "Clothing and accessories, espe-



cially, had been more of a touch-and-feel type of purchase. Ten years ago, it was a much smaller piece of the ecommerce market, but today that's one of the most rapidly growing areas—including men's clothing. So we were really trying to choose the channels and marketplaces where our customers would like to buy today—and where we anticipate them buying in the future."

Li currently uses Shopify to power his ecommerce operation at epicmens.com, and he went with Webgility to sync up his accounting and other sales data. "We started with Webgility from the beginning, so we never processed a manual order. When we first launched epicmens.com, we were actually using a different shopping platform, and Webgility made the transition to Shopify much easier—it was just a matter of re-configuring the software a bit. They also made it easy when we took the step to start selling on other marketplaces, like Amazon and eBay. Because, again, our strategy is: if a customer wants to buy on our store or from a marketplace, we're indifferent. We just want to make sure we're given the opportunity to present our products and brands as we want—and that our customers are able to shop as they want."

The Challenge



From his prior experience running an e-commerce operation, Li immediately saw the value Webgility would offer Epic Mens. “Having earlier launched and run an ecommerce business, I realized the critical importance of integrating the front office with the back office—accounting and inventory systems,” primarily to enable the business to scale and ramp up the volume, while keeping the accounting and inventory counts under control. “I knew we had to keep that storefront and the back office in sync, so we could grow this business, grow the volumes rapidly—without having to do a lot of manual data entry of orders into QuickBooks.”

Knowing from the start that he wanted to implement such a solution, Li assessed his options. “We did check out a few different alternatives—some that had been around a while, as well as a couple of newer products. But none of the alternatives had the feature set and integration we

were looking for. Of course, we also considered trying to write our own custom code—but we really didn’t want to get into the software business, with all the maintenance and upkeep that requires. Fortunately, we found that Webgility had all the functionality we needed.”

Yet Li—with an eye toward the future—had a more important consideration on his mind. “You can look at code or capabilities that are current now, but what really matters is what’s going to be available two, three, four, five years from now. Because you’re kind of entering into a partnership with your software supplier, and so—are they going to constantly upgrade the software? Are they constantly going to expand to new marketplaces and channels? After looking closely into this, I really felt that Webgility was in the best position to adapt and grow into the future.”

Reflecting on how his instincts have panned out since then, Li confidently states, “I’m very pleased with the product roadmap Webgility has taken with this product. We’ve really felt Webgility has a great future ahead of it.”



The Solution

Having selected Webgility from the start, Li has enjoyed and appreciated its many benefits. “It’s really allowed us to easily scale the business without having to worry about managing data or re-keying information. More importantly, the real-time integration of orders and inventory in our supply chain operations provides accurate and detailed information that guides decisions on purchasing, vendor selection, financial reporting, and where we should invest our time and money. And of course, we’ve certainly saved a lot of time and resources by not having to re-key this information and data into our back-office systems—as well as avoiding the human errors that are always associated with manual data entry.”

Li especially appreciates the tight integration of inventory and pricing data Webgility enables between QuickBooks and Epic Mens’ storefronts. “We’re now able to easily sync price and inventory between the storefronts and QuickBooks. So now, instead of doing inventory counts twice a year, we’re able to do accurate inventory counts between the warehouse and QuickBooks on a weekly basis, so we always know we’re ordering the right items in the right quantities. That’s been a huge plus,” says Li. “The syncing and reconciliation of inventory data—including which items are active in which storefront—saves a lot of manual or custom code or spreadsheet work, and keeps inventory accurate between the two. The initial focus was around the orders, but a lot of things happen around to inventory outside of orders. Things get lost. They get damaged. You have to set up new products. The benefits of having our inventory data so tightly coupled between the front office and back office are probably as valuable as getting orders into systems in the first



place. I really think those capabilities—which I didn't pay as much attention to initially—turned out to be as important, if not more important, to our operations.”

Assessing the greatest impact Webgility's had on Epic Mens' business, Li says, “What it's really allowed us to do was scale. With Webgility, we've been able to steadily increase the volume of our business, and when I look at doubling, tripling, quadrupling—whatever number you want to choose—we could easily scale the business without adding much in the way of incremental resources to our operation. Between the accounting, the supply chain operations, the business reporting, and the physical inventory count, Webgility probably saves us the equivalent cost of two full-time employees a year. That's fairly significant for a small business. And it's just good to know we're not limited in our ability to grow, to add products, brands, to our store due to any

type of bottleneck that might be posed between the storefront and our back office.”

“The one last thing I'd say about Webgility is that I never really have to worry about it—it just works. So, there's an added comfort there. It simply runs in the background through the scheduler, and it's just one less thing I need to worry about when I'm running a business, says Li. “If there are any issues—and, like I said, very few have come up—I know that support is always there as a safety net to help resolve any issues I might encounter. Most of my contact has been through email, but if I ever need to make a phone call, I find that support is extremely responsive and that there's really excellent follow up.”

“I'm very happy with the decision we made many years ago, and it's proven to do well for us, and I anticipate many, many more years using the software.”



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