

Volusion Ecommerce Software Helps The Pashmina Store Grow Beyond \$1 Million in Annual Sales

Online luxury scarf business seamlessly handles 700,000 visitors during four holiday seasons; built-in search engine optimization enables growth during economic downturn.

Goals:

- Expand business to one million in annual sales
- Improve site's SEO
- Streamline inventory management processes

Results:

- Quickly reached \$1 million in sales after switching to Volusion
- Handled more than 700,000 visitors over four holiday seasons
- Site ranked first on Google pages using key search terms
- Reduced time spent on shipping and inventory management
- Reduced website design costs and time spent adjusting product catalog

The Pashmina Store

The Pashmina Store provides the finest quality pashmina scarves, wraps, and shawls at reasonable prices. Products are created in Nepal using traditional artisan methods and only the softest materials available.

The Challenge

Blair Rhodes, co-owner of the Pashmina Store, had a business goal of reaching more than \$1 million per year in revenue. Reaching this goal would give the company more buying power with suppliers and allow it to take advantage of higher-volume discounts for shipping, inventory and other business necessities. The company was originally working with a different shopping cart provider, but its solution had technical limitations that



Fast Facts

- Named one of Apparel Magazine's Top 40 Innovators in 2010.
- The Pashmina Store was founded in February 2000 when Charlene Martina, an avid traveler and fashion enthusiast, took a lengthy tour of Southeast Asia.
- Pashmina is the traditional name for the very finest grade of cashmere wool. Because of its unique softness and comforting warmth, pashmina is also known as the diamond fabric and the soft gold of high Asia
- Cashmere comes exclusively from the underbelly of the Capra Hircus goat, in the most remote regions of the Himalayas.

hindered the store's growth. Additionally, The Pashmina store was not performing well in search engine results, which prevented additional customers from visiting the site. Achieving higher ratings in search queries would provide the online business with a heightened level of legitimacy and increase overall sales conversations, especially during the busy holiday season.

The Solution

Rhodes researched ecommerce website providers and determined Volusion was the "one-stop-shop" solution he needed. Volusion offered the following shopping cart features and benefits that were critical to the success of the company:

Unlimited Scalability: The scalable architecture with advanced load balancing and dynamic resourcing allows The Pashmina Store to meet its demanding spikes in traffic.

Mission Critical Hosting: With 100% redundancy, virtualized hardware-independent systems and continuous data backups with data clustering, Volusion offers The Pashmina Store the same technological infrastructure that powers systems for financial institutions.

Integrated SEO: SEO functionality allows merchants to fully optimize their sites. In Rhodes case, this results in top search engine rankings.

All-in-one Admin: With an all-in-one administrative area, The Pashmina Store can fully manage the customer experience and order processing from their Volusion admin.

Integrated CRM: With an advanced ticketing and built-in email system, Rhodes can easily communicate with customers in one central location.

Product Zoom: Enhanced merchandizing feature allows customers of The Pashmina Store to instantly magnify product details.

Stringent Security: Data is secured against theft or manipulation with integrated IP blocking, 24x7 surveillance and advanced encryption. PCI/CISP certification also ensures maximum

Our Site

Blair Rhodes had experience with web sites as a web designer for Hollywood studios and software companies. So when his online store, The Pashmina Store, went down during the Christmas season of 2004, he knew he could find an improved solution.

After doing much research, Blair chose Volusion. The Pashmina Store has had three very successful Christmas seasons with Volusion with their average sales growth exceeding 60% a year since their switch.

The Pashmina Store has continued to experience phenomenal growth and reached the \$1 million sales mark – a true milestone for Blair's business.



protection of card-holder data. Volusion provides The Pashmina Store with a guarantee that its customers' credit card information is securely collected and protected.

The Outcome

Soon after switching to Volusion, the platform's built-in SEO tools enabled The Pashmina Store to move up in the search results on all search engines. The Pashmina Store also experienced reduced costs and time-savings with Volusion's easy to use inventory management and shipping tools. They allow The Pashmina Store to quickly gauge product needs and place orders at the appropriate time, so they don't have the expense inherent with carrying too much inventory. Additionally, the shipping tools allow the store to quickly download batch files directly into shipping programs which was previously an arduous process. The Pashmina Store grew at a pace exceeding 60% each year from 2005 to 2007 and upon switching to Volusion, the company reached its \$1 million sales goal. Even with the consumer spending slowdown starting in late 2008 and lasting through late 2009, the business is still going strong. Rhodes notes the ability to quickly adjust the product catalog and pricing to meet customer needs and desires gives them a competitive edge.

Ease of Use

At any given time we can have four generations of family helping out with the business. This is especially the case around the holidays. We can have our almost 90-year old grandmother, her daughter and son (my mother and uncle), my sister and I, and several granddaughters and a grandson pitching in to help. This actually happened in May of this year as well when I had to have emergency brain surgery. Numerous family members pitched in, some even flying from out of state, to help keep things going. The fact that even technophobic family members were able to step in and use Volusion quickly is a testament to its ease-of-use. It took me almost four months to recover and thankfully now both the business and I are doing extremely well.

Quotes

"We've saved substantial amounts of time and labor costs."

"Much of our growth can be directly attributed to how easy Volusion makes SEO. When consumers see us at the top of the free search results, we gain instant credibility and paying customers."

"A large part of our growth can be attributed to the flexibility and cost-savings that a Volusion website offers."