

CASE STUDY:
D'Artagnan



Growing a business by launching an e-commerce operation

Company Profile:

D'Artagnan is a specialty food distributor that sources the highest quality organic poultry, game meats, charcuterie, and specialty mushrooms in the U.S. The company was founded 22 years ago by Ariane Daguin and George Faison with an initial investment of \$15,000. While its roots lie in wholesale distribution to restaurant and retail industries, demand provided an opportunity to expand into the direct-to-consumer market. CEO Daguin projects income for 2007 at \$46 million.

Challenge:

"Like everybody else, we were using paper and pen," Daguin says of the order and inventory management style used in the last century. For years the private company relied on old-fashioned methods of bookkeeping, staving off a capital investment in technology. But in 1996, it was clear that a software system would lessen that burden, create efficiency, and pave the way for greater sales.

"For us, a start-up, it was a big investment," Daguin explains, "but we realized we couldn't have a cheap solution, so we swallowed the bullet in order to grow the business. It was when we had the need and the means."

Munics was chosen.

KEY PRODUCTS IMPLEMENTED BY MUNICS

Step 1:

August 1996: Munics configures its **Basic Business System** software and develops a **Rapid Order Entry System** that provides customer profiles and easy up-selling with minimal keystrokes. The order entry system later becomes a module in **Next Generation™ Software**, approved by industry experts Gordon Graham and The Distribution Team. The **Truck Routing Module** manages pick-ups and deliveries with the company's fleet, maximizing efficiency.

Step 2:

January 2000: D'Artagnan.com launches as a consumer e-commerce website. The site showcases product lines, accepts orders and payments, and routes orders for fulfillment. This process takes place throughout the day so orders are processed as quickly as possible. The EDI interface is expanded to access orders from major retailers such as Amazon.com and Williams-Sonoma. Implementation of the **Credit Card Module** allowed immediate processing of transactions by interfacing with banks through ICVERIFY.

Step 3:

November 2003: The **Shipping and Receiving Scanning Module** and the **Freight Interface Module** are added to the D'Artagnan software system. Together these modules boost efficiency of truck loading and customer deliveries, and provide pinpoint tracking of shipments by UPS, FedEx, DHL and other carriers.

Step 4:

July 2004: Installation of **Warehousing System** cuts costs and increases efficiency through the use of handheld scanners. Pickers are directed to specific warehouse locations and product tags without using any paper documents. This system insures that the correct product is picked according to D'Artagnan's "freshness" guideline.



Solution:

Like many clients of Munics, D'Artagnan had special needs that off-the-shelf software programs could not address. It's an around-the-clock business that swells from November to January for the holidays. A fortified system that could coordinate all aspects of sales, order tracking and fulfillment was required. In the fresh food business, late can mean spoiled, so accuracy and timeliness are imperative.

"We sell products with a quantity of *pounds* or *each*, for example," says Daguin. "Because of the uniqueness of our business we had to tweak—and at other times perform major modifications—to the software, and I think that is Munics' big strength: To work with your idiosyncrasies."

From tailoring the product units of sale to providing thorough integration and support that continues to this day, the Munics team has consistently met the call of D'Artagnan, enabling the start-up to scale its business to the \$46 million company it is today.

Bottom Line:

"Technology is very, very important to our business. What Munics did was provide us with the tools to service our customers and to put the metrics in place to see how we were doing with the numbers."

– Ariane Daguin, CEO, D'Artagnan