ECS COFFEE
espresso & coffee gear

eCommerce and Marketplace ERP Integration for Retailers

Case Study

ECS Coffee – At a Glance

ECS coffee has been selling high quality coffee and espresso gear since 1997 after starting out as a vending machine business.

Situation

ECS Coffee has three selling channels which consists of office sales, a retail showroom and an Magento eCommerce website. The company has over 30 employees and 1,000 SKUs.

Challenge

ECS Coffee struggled with connecting their three systems. They used QuickBooks for accounting and invoicing, a retail POS System and their online website which worked fine separately but didn't allow for a seamless flow of information. Another challenge they faced was in regard to their inventory management and manual processes.

Solution

The best way to connect their three systems and set a focus for their inventory was to implement Blue Link ERP. Blue Link and ECS met on a few occasions to discuss business needs and processes. It was determined that Blue Link would be able to provide the functionality ECS Coffee needed and soon became the company's trusted technology partner.

Result

After implementing Blue Link, ECS has been able to clean up with inventory management and seamlessly connect all three areas of the business for better reporting and analysis. The company has been able to scale back their manual processes, track all products coming in and out and have the tools needed for purchasing/procurement.

Situation

Since 1997, ECS Coffee has been serving the Canadian market high quality coffee and espresso gear. Neil Madden started the company out of his garage in Ontario, Canada as a vending machine business and has since scaled it to employ over 30 people, sell around 1,000 SKU's and scale from $2 million to $4 million within 2 years.

ECS Coffee has three selling channels which consists of office sales, a retail showroom and a state-of-the-art Magento eCommerce website.

Challenge

ECS Coffee uses 3 systems including QuickBooks for accounting and invoicing, a retail POS system in their showroom and the online Magneto website. The use of the three systems was completely disconnected meaning they were unable to tie together sales to the same customer via different channels e.g., online and at the showroom. This resulted in incomplete customer history and impacted the loyalty points program.

One of the biggest challenges ECS Coffee faced was with their inventory control. The only time they had an accurate record of inventory numbers was during their annual inventory count on December 31st. They had no way of tracking individual K-Cups being sold or being used as free samples. They also couldn't track returns and has no means of obtaining automated reports. The consequences the company faced from this were:

> No tools to plan and predict needs for purchasing/procurement. The Supply Chain Manager would walk around the warehouse and visually determine what was low in stock and what needed to be reordered.

> No ability to assess profitability other than at year end.

> No way to determine gross margins by customer or product due to no accurate or reliable cost of goods sold.

> No way to manage prices and cost increases on a timely basis due to no accurate or reliable cost of goods sold.

Inventory management processes were so outdated that when a product was out of stock, an employee would physically write it on a whiteboard for another employee to remove off the website. Once the product was back in stock again another employee would have to quickly put it back on the website. Because this manual process sometimes took so long, if a customer placed an order online and they didn't have the inventory to fill the order, someone would have to contact the customer and offer alternatives or process a credit for the account. Getting a call about an out-of-stock item isn't always the best way to find out, it's best to know before purchasing. Having a system that allowed for different areas of the business to speak to each other was exactly what ECS Coffee needed.

Solution

ECS Coffee prides themselves on exceptional coffee and service. They were not able to achieve this level of service with multiple systems so owner Neil Madden, decided it was time to start searching for an all-in-one ERP solution. A solution that matched the quality of their coffee. Neil reached out to Blue Link and after first initial discussions it seemed like the company would be a great fit for the software and an in-depth business process analysis meeting was planned. During the meeting it was determined that ECS Coffee did indeed need Blue Link ERP as it has functionality for:

> Inventory management with the ability to proactively manage purchasing and replenishment
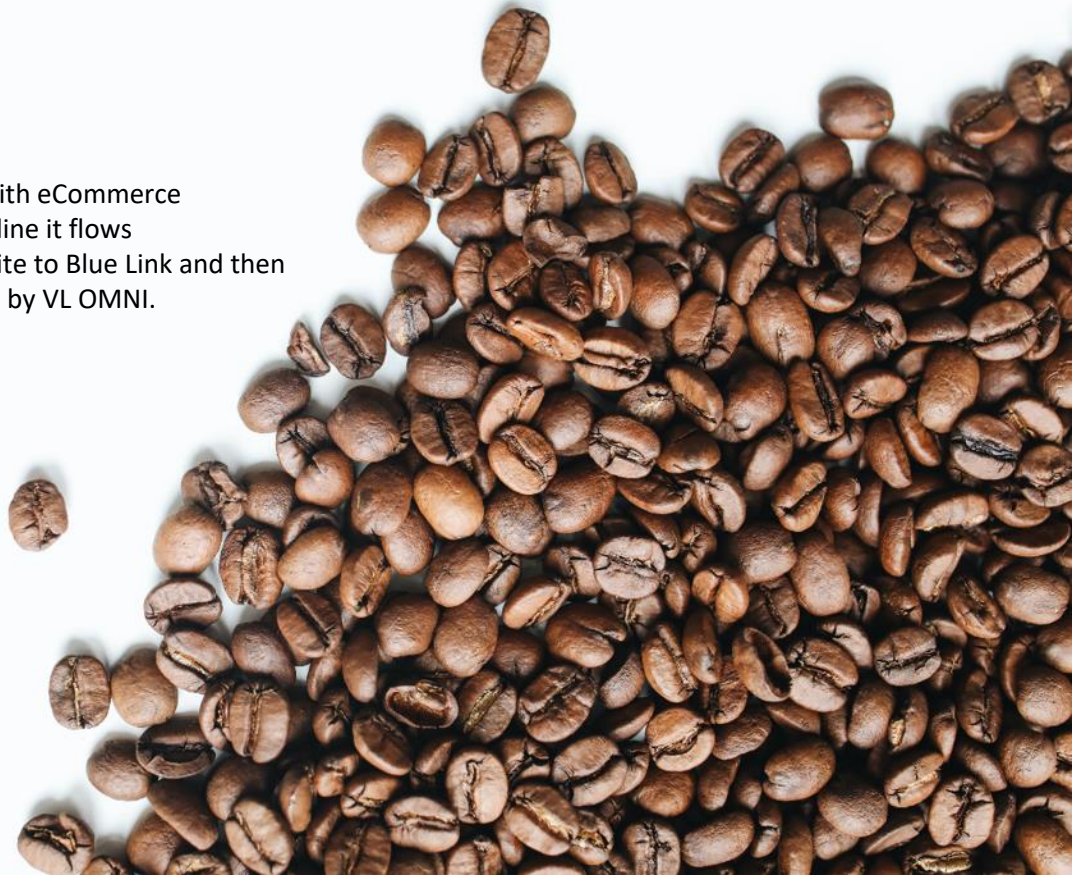
> Tracking all product returns

> Consistent automated reporting on what items are selling and the amounts

> Integration of all 3 business areas: Office sales, Online sales, Showroom sales

Once the needs of the company were laid out, it was determined that Blue Link was the right fit for the business and could successfully implement the required functionalities within the timeframe and budget. Not only was ECS Coffee soon going to be able to provide up-to-date information to their customers for better service, but they were also going to be able to have access to proper reporting and analysis for their inventory and warehouse management.

Blue Link eCommerce Integration

With Blue Link's ability to integrate with eCommerce websites, when an order is placed online it flows automatically from the eCommerce site to Blue Link and then back again using integration provided by VL OMNI.

Result

As their trusted technology partner, Blue Link has helped ECS Coffee grow year over year. Now that all manual processes have been automated, an employee rarely deals directly with an order, and they no longer need to update the website manually. When orders are placed and shipped, Blue Link works behind the scenes to ensure inventory numbers are in real time and has successfully integrated all areas of the business to show the same information.

Blue Link has also cleaned up ECS Coffee's warehouse and inventory by implementing a system that minimizes time and increases efficiency. Instead of an employee walking around looking for items, they're now following a pick review screen to assist them with this process.

" Blue Link allows for resources and information at our fingertips and enables us to make quicker and better decisions moving forward.
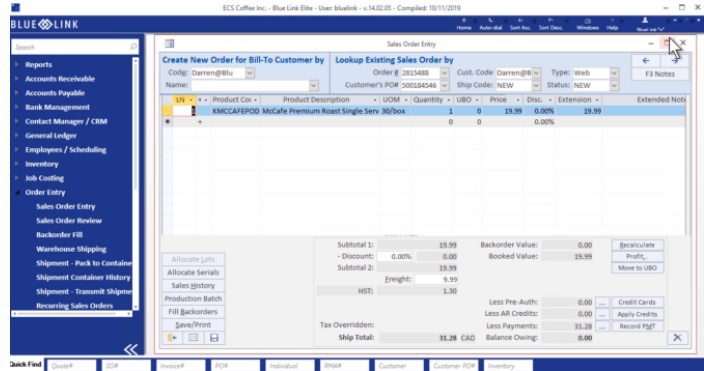
Neil Madden, Owner

Overview of Order Process for ECS Coffee's Shopify Website with Blue Link ERP.

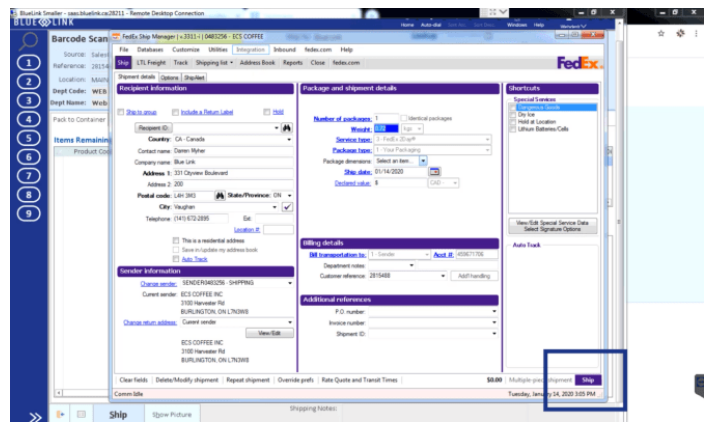**Step One: Enter order through online eCommerce store.**

Step Two: Review the order in Blue Link after the information automatically populates from the Shopify Store

Inside Blue Link, the order review screen has been updated with the new order that was just placed. You will notice the Shopify order number appears in the purchase order field for easy cross-reference. Even the payment information is transferred over automatically. And, if you choose to set up criteria, some orders will automatically get sent to the warehouse for picking, packing and shipping.
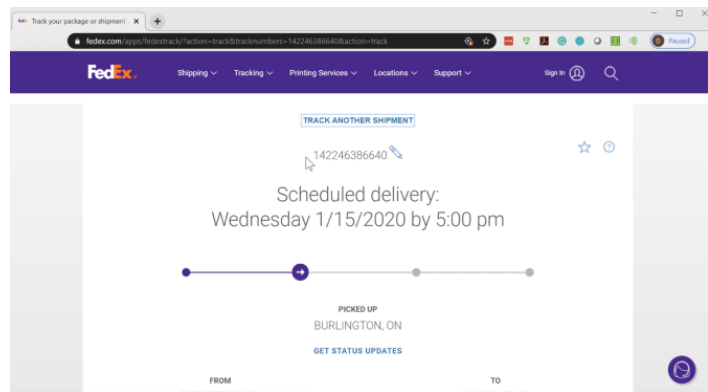

Step Three: Pick, pack and ship the order

Shipping the order in Blue Link is very easy. After the product is picked, an employee scans the barcode once to bring the order up on the screen and an additional scan to pack it into a container. Blue Link integrates with various shipping software and in this case the order number pulls shipping information into FedEx and by clicking 'Ship' it returns the information to Blue Link.

Step Four: Automatically update all systems and notify the customer that the order has shipped

Shipping the order in Blue Link automatically changes the order status, allowing VL OMNI to work behind the scenes, close the order in Shopify and update the tracking information online for the customer to see. The only time a person had to interact with the system was to physically pick and ship the order. All other aspects were completely automated.

B L U E 🔷 L I N K

With a focus on small to medium size businesses, Blue Link strives to help companies grow and improve their processes by providing innovative solutions to complex problems – without the large price tag.

With Blue Link, you will be able to:

- ✓ **Grow Your Business** with a fully integrated and automated system
- ✓ **Decrease Costs** with better inventory management
- ✓ **Save Time and Reduce Errors** with automated processes across all business operations.

Work With Us.

https://www.bluelinkerp.com/

> " I would like to thank you very much for all your help!
> You patiently explain everything to us and do a great job helping
> us to fix issues (like the ones we had today) when we need it!
>
> Michelle Crossan, VP Operations, ECS Coffee