

CASE STUDY



Learn how Oliberté Limited used Blue Link ERP, EDI Integration and Automation to grow their business.

Oliberté Limited – At a Glance

Oliberté Ltd, is a shoe company that owns and operates the first fair trade certified shoe factory in the world. With less than 10 employees, the company believes that “every pair, every person, every purchase matters” and they constantly work on building their vision on supporting workers’ rights and conducting ethical, sustainable manufacturing.

Every Pair
Every Person
Every Purchase
MATTERS

Oliberté Ltd

Situation

Oliberté primarily sells in Canada, the US and about 50 other countries through two selling channels: direct to consumer (eCommerce website) and large retailers. They have multiple warehouses around the world and are rapidly growing.

Challenge

Oliberté is a small business and because of their minimal software and manual processes, they did not have the ability for EDI integration which was a necessity for working with large retailers. As their eCommerce site was growing, they also struggled with inventory management and understanding the true cost of their products.

Solution

The solution for Oliberté was to implement Blue Link ERP software and choose them to be their trusted technology partner. Blue Link functionality can successfully automate their manual processes, provide them with the correct tools for growth and offer ongoing assistance and/or help with anything Oliberté needed from a technology partner.

Result

As a result of implementing Blue Link ERP, Oliberté can understand costs, inventory and more in real time. Oliberté has grown 100% year after year and Blue Link ERP has been able to provide all the tools necessary for their growth. Even though the company was smaller than others using Blue Link, the software has given them the opportunity to work with any large retailer they choose to.



Situation

Oliberté is a Canadian based shoe company that owns the world's first fair trade certified shoe factory located in Ethiopia. The company operated this factory for nearly a decade with the view of "treating everyone with respect, every step of the way." Today, Oliberté has shifted manufacturing to primarily in Canada, building on their vision to support workers' rights and environmental stewardship worldwide.

"We are a proud Canadian company and believe that also means being a responsible business globally."

Each pair of shoes is handcrafted using the finest materials and created in small batches to ensure an unmatched quality in each pair that is backed by their lifetime warranty. During the Covid Pandemic, Oliberté used their energy and resources to manufacture masks to aid friends, family and the community that needed the help. Aside from mask production, the company sells primarily direct to consumer through their website and large retailers. They are currently selling in Canada, the US and about 50 other countries.



FEBRUARY 2009
OLIBERTÉ LAUNCHES



AUGUST 2012
ETHIOPIAN FACTORY OPENS



SEPTEMBER 2013
WORLD'S FIRST FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED™
SHOE FACTORY



SEPTEMBER 2017
100,000 PAIRS HANDCRAFTED



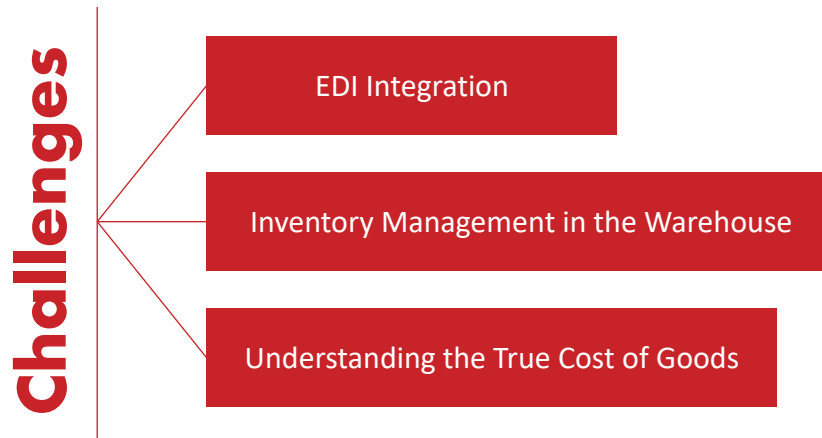
OCTOBER 2019
CANADIAN MANUFACTURING BEGINS



MARCH 2020
OLIBERTÉ PIVOTS TO MANUFACTURE
MASKS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

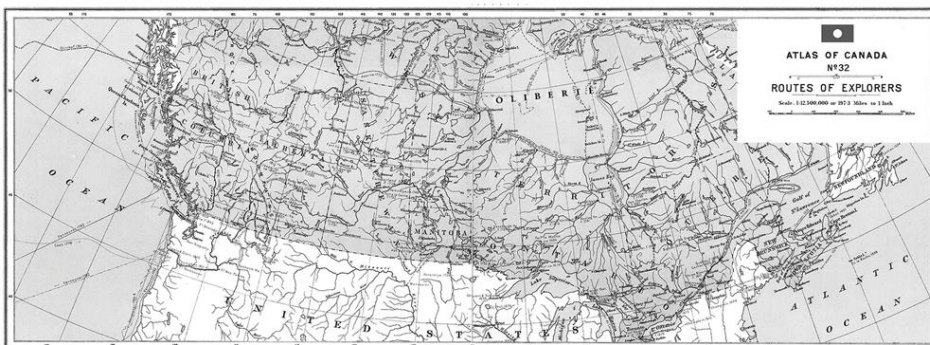
Challenges

Oliberté found the need to integrate all three areas of the business: The warehouses, the retail side and the eCommerce website. As a small company, Oliberté was using systems that were not compliant with EDI integration in order to work with the big retailers that would help scale their business. Being EDI compliant meant they could easily trade documents with their retail partners with no issues.



Since the company was originally manufacturing in Ethiopia and adding final touches in Canada, the need to understand true costs of the product such as freight, duty and brokerage was evident. At this point they were not able to factor these costs into the inventory value and cost of goods sold. Without tracking landed costs, the company has no way of knowing what to expect for future accounts payable and made it a tedious task when analyzing profitability and fair salaries.

Inventory management was another challenge Oliberté faced. As a company in the apparel industry, it was a tough task to create and manage inventory and seamlessly integrate that data to their eCommerce website. Every single shoe is individually handcrafted so customization would be an advantageous function and a key factor for company growth. Oliberté was also using two different 3PL's (3rd party warehouses) that presented further complications with inventory management. The company was unable to integrate data from both warehouses, again an important requirement when analyzing profitability and reducing manual processes (such as the need to re-key data).



Each pair comes wrapped in a Canadian explorer's map to inspire you to take your new boots on the paths less explored.

Solution

In order to facilitate growth and tie all components of the company together, Tal, founder and president of Oliberté knew that the benefit of investing in the right software from the start will assist with company operations and facilitate growth. Tal knew that the best solution was to find an all-in-one ERP software to manage the company's challenges. Blue Link's ability for EDI integration, inventory management and accounting seemed to be the perfect fit for even a small company such as Oliberté.



After initial discussions and meetings, Blue Link and Oliberté liked the idea of working together but agreed that it's best to do things right instead of fast. The Blue Link team and the Oliberté team worked together to create customizations and functionalities required for Oliberté and took their time ensuring everything would work accurately. Since budget is always on the back of a business owners mind, Tal found it beneficial to explore options using flat files/text files/CSV to exchange data as an alternative to EDI. This still would require integration functionality through Blue Link but did not present any issues and still allowed Oliberté to work with large retail giants like Nordstrom.

Blue Links' Landed Cost Tracking

[Blue Link's landed cost tracking software](#) allowed Oliberté to account for all costs associated with getting inventory to their warehouses — the true inventory costs. As a distributor with multiple warehouses, knowing the true costs of the product is beneficial for profitability reporting. Also, Oliberté prides themselves on being a social company who pay their people fairly, providing them jobs that will last forever. The landed cost tracking function in Blue Link allows the company to do just that.

Blue Links' Product Matrix Feature

[Blue Link's Product Matrix function](#) is perfect for a company like Oliberté as it allows their staff to build out their inventory quickly both on a color and base product standpoint. Looking at a lot of SKU's can get confusing and be time-consuming to analyze. Blue Link's Product Matrix function streamlines the ordering processes of these products by inputting orders through a grid format — which is the most productive way. Not only does the matrix allow Oliberté's employees to input products and quantities more efficiently, but it also gives them insight into their inventory management by allowing them to see which products (by color or size) are available and will not show them the quantities already allocated.

Result

Since the company is growing their direct-to-consumer aspect of the business, the real time data available in Blue Link gives Oliberté a better understanding of their inventory, costs, and provides a seamless flow of information from warehouse to warehouse. Now with the ability for data exchange between Oliberté and retailers, the company has successfully created partnerships with large retailers and have been able to grow their business.

“The support from a tech and customer standpoint is one of Blue Link’s biggest aspects.” You don’t just get the software, you get ongoing support and reliability.

BLUE LINK

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/>