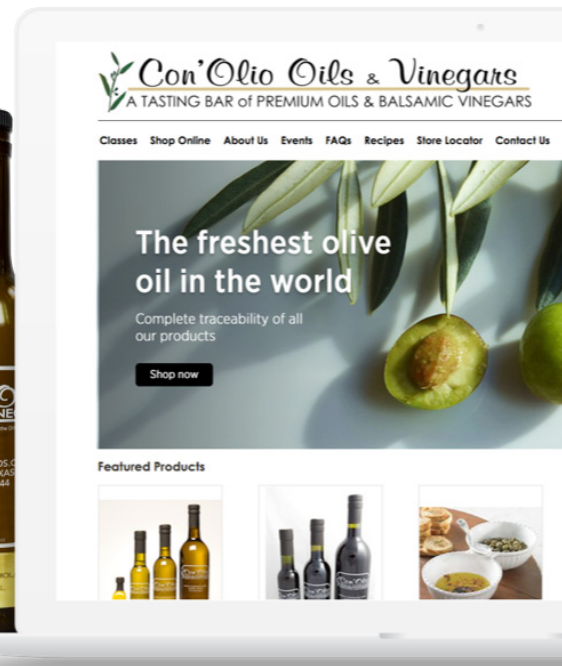




CASE STUDY

Con' Olio gets the tools to grow with BigCommerce

Specialty oil and vinegar shop boosts sales using advanced ecommerce features.



20%
increase in sales

3
brick-and-mortar locations

2007
opened first tasting
store in Austin, Texas

Trading in corporate careers for self-made success

Husband and wife open brick-and-mortar shop for a higher quality of life

Tired of the long hours and low quality of life that came with years in the IT industry, Jeff and Tabatha Conarko knew they wanted to work for themselves and find something more rewarding. But it took a trip to Italy in 2007 to find exactly what they wanted to do. Knowing that the artisanal olive oils and vinegars they loved eating there were nearly impossible to find in the US, they decided to make a new career out of selling them in Austin, Texas.

“Jeff and I came from corporate America,” said Tabatha. “We have children, and I think ultimately we wanted to be home more with them and have the flexibility to watch them grow up and be able to travel. We wanted them to see us start something and hopefully make them proud of us.”

They opened Con' Olio Oils & Vinegars, a tasting room and specialty store, in Austin, Texas. There they introduced the American palate to exceptional products like their 18-year-aged balsamic vinegar and ultra-premium extra-virgin olive oils.



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Jeff Conarko, Owner

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Expanding online for greater reach

Ecommerce adds a new revenue stream, moving to BigCommerce increases sales

Once it was clear that there was a strong demand for their products, the Conarkos knew the next step was opening an online store. For the first iteration, they built their own ecommerce website. But it lacked the features they needed to grow their business and was difficult to update. In 2013, they went looking for a solution that let them take advantage of the latest ecommerce and marketing best practices without a big up-front investment — they settled on BigCommerce.

“We chose BigCommerce because, for a very low fee every month, we got all the technology we needed to run our business and reach more customers,” said Jeff. “Things like marketing tools, shipping integrations, customer management and inventory control were all included. That plus the improvements in our website design and ease of use for customers have increased our online sales by 20%.”

One thing that helped the Conarkos grow Con’ Olio’s web sales was BigCommerce’s integrations with email marketing and shipping services.

“Using BigCommerce, we’re able to integrate our email service, Mailchimp, so we can easily export customer data,” said Tabatha.

“Because of that, email marketing — specifically our newsletter — has been our most effective way to drive traffic to the site.”

“The other functionality that I love, which was a huge one for us, was integrating our shipping partner. Before we had that, we were just coming up with a canned shipping rate. Now customers can actually get a real, live shipping rate based on what they’re buying. Instead of losing money on shipping, we’re actually covering our costs.”



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Tabatha and Jeff also liked BigCommerce's built-in analytics, which allowed them to measure the impact of moving their online store from day one. They rely on the detailed reporting to track sales and monitor their top customers and what they're buying so they can send targeted offers based on buying history.

Plans for future expansion

Opening in new markets while reducing operating expenses

"Realizing our dream of having our own company and the feeling of achievement that comes with finding success from our efforts has been really rewarding," said Jeff. "And even with all the work that goes into running a business, we've actually lowered our stress."

In the next two years, the Conarkos plan on expanding to at least one more brick-and-mortar location in a new market, and hope to continue their year-over-year growth while reducing operating expenses.

Their advice for others looking to start a successful business?

"Don't be afraid to try," said Tabatha. "If you have an idea that you try and it doesn't work, then you can just move onto the next idea. We tried a lot of different things for our business — some worked and some didn't. You just keep moving forward."

"Yes, and don't hesitate to start your own business just because you may not know every little thing you think you need to," added Jeff. "Just move forward with the knowledge you have at the time and learn everything else as you go. And you should always find out how to do things yourself as much as possible, rather than relying on someone else."



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Growing your high-volume or established business?

Call for a demo. [1-866-581-4549](tel:1-866-581-4549)

