



taking shape
SIZES 12 - 24

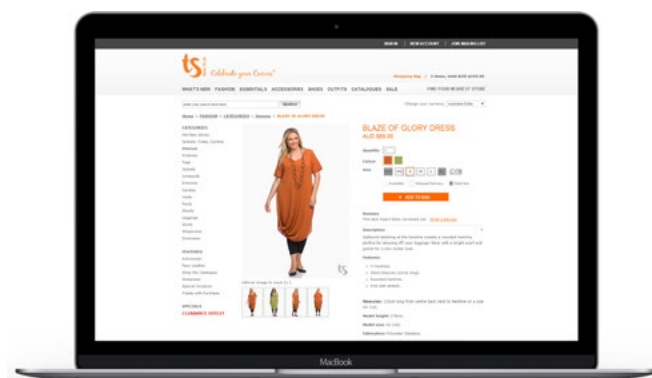
BRANDS TO CELEBRATE YOUR CURVES®

Taking Shape takes online channel to a new level

“We’ve been able to cope with 85% growth in volume out of one of our warehouses with a third less staff!”

For 30 years Taking Shape has been a dominant force in women’s plus-size fashion in Australia and New Zealand. In 2003 Taking Shape launched its first online sales presence. The online store is their digital flagship store, showcasing their entire collection.

Taking Shape now has more than 140 locations throughout Australasia, including 50 outlets within Myer, Australia’s largest department store. Focused on designer collections in sizes 12-24, the brand is known for its edgy and dressy fashions.



Much like its fashion sensibility, the company has achieved commercial success by being leading edge. “As a company we are innovators, willing to try things and invest in initiatives that will deliver success,” says Systems Project Manager Sandra Del Greco, who leads the organisation’s online activities.

Taking Shape’s achievements have been acknowledged by the industry, with the company named the 2010 Australian retailer of the year in the clothing and footwear category, and recognised as Myer’s best concession partner in 2008 and 2009.

Determination To Do More

Typical of an innovator, Taking Shape was not satisfied with the technology behind its online channel, even though the store itself was delivering solid returns, and in 2010 initiated a project to review its web stores and develop a platform for future growth.

“We have not had one minute of downtime with eStar, not a second”

“Our system was antiquated, and we were having increasing problems with it. It wasn’t integrated with our other systems, so it couldn’t do things like reflecting stock levels,” says Sandra, who initiated research into alternative platforms. “I started researching online with a range of keywords that were important to me, and eStar kept coming up. I was attracted to the fact they had so many Australian customers, including fashion companies.”

Sandra talked to a number of vendors, but found no-one else had the same understanding of both the challenge, and the importance, of integrating their online store with back office systems. “We use Harmony POS & Retail Management as our core system, and eStar were already integrating with it at another fashion retailer.”

Seamless Approach Powerful

The visibility and control provided by having a direct link between the online channel and systems managing back office functions like inventory and distribution cannot be understated, says Sandra. “I went to an online retail workshop recently and realised that not many other retailers understood this.”

Taking Shape were focused on achieving that level of integration, and give the company a platform for future innovation and growth in its online business. After selecting eStar and its iSAMS (internet sales and management system) solution as their new ecommerce platform provider, an intensive implementation process resulted in the online presence Taking Shape was aiming for fully integrated with their Harmony Retail system.

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eStar’s iSAMS solution has given Taking Shape a lot of valuable features, such as processing and managing orders, and scanning goods, says Sandra.

Unshakeable eCommerce Foundation

An indicator of the new platform’s effectiveness has been the positive customer response they are getting, Sandra says. “We constantly get customer feedback, they are very pleased with it.” Customer calls around issues such as delayed or incorrect deliveries have also dropped right off.

Customer satisfaction has been enhanced too, with Taking Shape able to achieve 36 hours turnaround on the vast majority of orders, which is exceptionally good on an industry basis. “Transaction processing has been great, particularly with the large increase in volumes.”

The level of automation afforded by the eStar platform means they have been able to handle the huge growth in volumes, says Sandra. “For example, we’ve been able to cope with 85% growth in volume out of one of our warehouses with a third less staff!”

Overall stability was a key concern before the project, says Sandra, as they had had a lot of problems with this in the past. “But we have not had one minute of downtime with eStar, not a second. I find it astonishing, given there was a major earthquake in Christchurch, but it was like nothing happened.”

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