

### **Challenge**

Creative Irish Gifts had outgrown its entry-level Mail Order Manager system and wanted to move up to a more stable environment which could continue to meet the needs of the growing company, especially maintaining its customer service levels.

### **Solution**

It implemented Data Management Associates' MACH as its catalog and internet order management software.

### **Results**

In the six years since the MACH implementation, Creative Irish Gifts has grown from 80 thousand to more than 220 thousand orders per year. At the same time, its customer service levels have remained consistently high.



Creative Irish Gifts ([shopirish.com](http://shopirish.com)) is a multi-channel retailer with a strong catalog and internet presence as well as a small retail operation at their world headquarters in Streetsboro, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. It has been in operation since 1986 as a source of funding for the Irish Children's Fund, an organization dedicated to bring Catholic and Protestant children from Northern Ireland to Illinois and Indiana to spend the summer living with and learning about children of the opposite religious and political affiliation.

In 2000, the company began the search for a robust order management system to replace its present unreliable system which it had outgrown. Inventory items were being dropped from customer's orders or being applied to another customer's order. Some orders were missing and report data was often incomplete.

"It was obvious that we had outgrown the system and needed to replace it if we were to maintain our desired level of customer service and insure that we had systems in place to continue on a path of managing and growing our business," said Debi Rauckhorst, general manager of [shopirish.com](http://shopirish.com).

Rauckhorst and her management team looked for a system that had a stable environment and could integrate with their business. They also needed extensive personalization features since personalized gifts are a major portion of their product offering. Besides system requirements which needed to be met, ShopIrish also was looking for a specific type of company - one which was not too big and was easy to work with on a day-to-day basis. As Rauckhorst stated, she didn't want [shopirish.com](http://shopirish.com) to become, "just a customer number to a vendor."

After an extensive search, ShopIrish decided MACH met their requirements and the two companies began to work together to convert the ShopIrish data files, implement the system and train staff.

On a Friday in April of 2001, the last order on the old system shipped out and by the following Monday morning, the MACH system was up, running and taking catalog and shopirish.com orders.

Since then, ShopIrish has experienced rapid growth, increasing its orders from 80 thousand in 2002 to 220 thousand orders in 2006. It also has more than doubled its MACH licenses from 30 to 75. This was due not only to their volume increase, but also because they were able to connect their overflow call centers directly into MACH instead of having to batch transfer overflow call center orders into the system.

Besides a jump in licenses, they've expanded their overall use of the MACH system, utilizing more functionality as their company grows.

- A few years ago, ShopIrish began to import and process Amazon orders and reconcile those payments through MACH.
- At the call centers, they have added the up-sell program on their telephone orders, increasing sales and Average Order Value (AOV).
- On the selling side, shopirish.com has recently begun to use bracket pricing, which discounts the price per piece when ordering larger quantities of a specific item. This is supporting an increased AOV.
- In the warehouse, shopirish.com has improved efficiencies by matching PICK locations with the serpentine path the Picker walks. They also have eliminated the old system's batch stickers, which has resulted in a cost savings and has eliminated the need for a label to be placed on a gift item.
- Shipping confirmations via email has improved their customer service and reduced the number of calls into the center.

Not only has ShopIrish continued its rapid growth, but its on-line sales have become a larger piece of its business – increasing from less than 20 percent in 2001 to almost 50 percent in 2006. According to Rauckhorst, MACH has met the changing needs.

“We have been able to adapt to changing times in the catalog and on-line industry with the support of DMA (Data Management Associates) and our software. Capturing data in various formats allows us to have a better understanding of where our business is coming from and how to better market our products. Most of our needs are met by DMA.” She said. “And if it doesn't initially seem possible, it is often researched and MACH finds a way to provide a solution.”

As shopirish.com continues its success in both the catalog and on-line arena, it expects MACH to move forward with it.

“I'm not worried about outgrowing this system like we did the last. MACH is reliable and stable and continues to grow with us.” Rauckhorst said. “It's reliable in our slower months where we may only process 250 orders per day and it's reliable during our peak season where we might process as many as 3,000 orders per day. The system and the people at MACH consistently meet any challenge that our high number of daily orders presents.”

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