



Stem Footwear Strolls into the Spotlight with 3dcart and Marketing Media

Launched in September 2011, Stem Footwear sells minimalist “barefoot” shoes for men and women made from air-infused rubber that helps customers walk more naturally. Advocates of the “barefoot running” movement, the Pennsylvania-based company’s shoes help introduce customers to a way of walking that helps reduce back, knee and foot problems.

A Runner’s Big Idea to Help Walkers Evolve

A former victorious Purdue decathlete and High School National Champion in the Pole Vault, Andrew Rademacher has an evident passion for running. “I’ve always enjoyed running and competing at a competitive level but past injuries had unfortunately impacted my performance. Years later, I learned what I wish I would’ve known then about running, the human body, and what we wear.”

Andrew’s passion for running, coupled with the position he held at a retail running store for two years, sparked an idea that he couldn’t ignore.

A few years ago, the concept of “barefoot running” arose as a practice that helps avoid and correct long-term running injuries by assisting a more natural running technique.

The introduction of barefoot running sparked a wave of positive feedback from sufferers of chronic back, knee and foot pain—but it also met with a slew of complaints that barefoot running was causing more harm than good. Andrew located the source of the problem.

“People have been conditioned to wear these highly supportive, heavily cushioned, restrictive shoes on their feet,” Andrew explains.

“They are used to having natural motion prohibited and lack any sense of touch. When moving from one extreme to another—from completely dependent feet to running three miles barefoot at the drop of a hat—you will absolutely cause more harm than good. We need to be better educated and know that there is a transition period to minimalism.”

Taking a scientific perspective, Andrew elaborates. “We have been conditioned to wear a device on our feet that is completely unnatural. Shoes have elevated heels that throw the spine out of natural alignment by lifting the heels. A higher heel position, like that on 95 percent of running shoes, tilts the hips forward arcing the spine and directly causing lower back pain. Traditional shoes are also unfortunately designed with narrow toeboxes smashing the toes together and constricting movement. This tightens underfoot ligaments causing overpronation, fallen and weak arches, heel pain, shin splints and many other conditions that are unavoidable in traditional shoes.”

Andrew knew there was a simple answer: introduce the barefoot experience into the casual footwear market. The casual barefoot concept was a sparse market, so it would require a lot of research and energy spent dissecting the physics.



Eventually, the concept behind Stem Footwear came to fruition: a minimalist shoe design that leveraged light-weight, flexible air-infused rubber and an incomparable natural foot-shape fit to facilitate a more natural walking experience.

Over the course of the next year and a half, the planning and manufacturing began. Andrew put up a landing page for Stem Footwear to build some buzz around the product before it was delivered to the market. "We logged 5-10 preorders a day, eventually receiving more than 2,000 requests for the product."

The next step for Andrew and Stem Footwear was finding the right shopping cart to launch the store.



Stem Footwear Partners with Marketing Media for Ecommerce Excellence

Andrew hit the web in search of a shopping cart software platform to launch his business, starting with a Google search that returned some of the most popular options on the market. He investigated feature-rich ecommerce sites like BigCommerce, Magento, Volusion and 3DCart and signed up for a few free trials to get more acquainted with each of the platforms.

Referred via a web search to 3dcart partner Marketing Media, a user experience design firm specializing in online retail store design (and part of 3dcart's new referral program), Andrew abandoned his initial decision to use a template design provided by the shopping cart software he would eventually choose.

"Between Marketing Media's expertise and the importance of designing a unique brand for the concept, I saw real value in hiring someone to help me optimize my store design," Andrew remarks. "While a lot of design firms put more time into flashy surface design, Marketing Media had a great track record for focusing on optimizing the user experience."

Marketing Media director of business development Christian Fillion says that a big part of the company's value offering is more than just design. "Our staff has the experience and know-how to launch an online store, so we do our best to guide our clients as consultants," Christian explains.



As a 3dcart partner, Marketing Media has a strong understanding of the software's strengths. Based on Andrew's requirements, Christian and his team suggested that 3dcart would be the best platform to help launch Stem Footwear for three key reasons:

1. B2B Flexibility

In addition to an easy-to-use backend, Christian knew that 3dcart had powerful features for business-to-business transactions. "Andrew needed a way to sell wholesale to other retail stores so he could expand his audience," Christian says. "On the backend, 3dcart makes it simple to set up unique distributor logins and set individual pricing based on each one. With regards to B2B flexibility, it's a more powerful platform than anything else we've seen on the market."

2. Customization Potential

For his unique product offering, Andrew wanted the brand to have its own look and feel, and 3dcart makes it simple for Marketing Media to access design resources like CSS. "Very few other ecommerce software providers offer the level of access to CSS that 3dcart does," Christian says.

3. Customer Support

"3dcart support has been there to respond to my urgent questions 24/7 with their own live chat and 1-800 number," Andrew says. "And for questions that require more explanation or screenshots, I email support and get an answer back within an hour."

Stem Footwear's Successful Store Launch

On September 15, Stem Footwear opened its doors to a flood of new orders. In the first 30 minutes, the company logged more than 45 items sold. Six hours in, Stem Footwear had received 100 orders. By the end of the first day, more than 180 customers had ordered the new style of shoe.

"We're still a small company, so we didn't push much marketing other than the preorder landing page," Andrew said. "The response wasn't overwhelming in terms of how prepared we were, but it was about as big of a response as we could handle."

Leveraging a social media presence was a huge priority for Andrew—and 3dcart was ready to deliver. "It took me five minutes to get our Facebook store set up," he says.

But that wasn't the only viral marketing channel his new platform would give him the ability to set up quickly and easily. "Our promotional manager is a simple-to-use part of how we track coupon codes."

Andrew looks forward to spending more time using 3dcart's Live Chat feature to enhance Stem Footwear's customer service—a benefit that he expects will come in handy for curious customers with only basic knowledge of the product. "Setting up our payment portal through 3dcart partner Authorize.net helps alleviate customer concerns in that department so we can focus our time on converting leads and, as a result, building a successful business."



About 3dcart

3dcart (<http://www.3dcart.com>), located in Tamarac, Florida, is a complete ecommerce software solution for merchants to build, promote and grow their online business. The company's services include the tools, advice, support, and technology to manage an entire online operation. Since 1997, 3dcart has been developing internet solutions for small to medium size businesses. Today, 3dcart is an Inc. 5000 company, a Visa PCI Certified provider and a pioneer in Mobile Commerce and Social Marketing.