



## With 3dcart, New Mexico Tea Company is Moving Full Steam Ahead

Like many prospective entrepreneurs, David Edwards didn't go to school to learn how to run a business. In fact, David set out to study photography and graphic design only to discover that life had different plans. In the middle of his collegiate efforts, David fell in love, had a child and soon realized the immense financial burdens that come with fatherhood. He then dropped out of school to find a job and start whittling down the bills that began to pile up.

In 2006, shortly after getting a divorce, David took a job working on a cruise ship as a last resort of sorts for a bored 25-year-old with plenty of schooling but no degree. Upon setting out to sea, David soon realized he wanted more out of life as he yearned to break away from the daily grind and build a business he could call his own. "It dawned on me that if I wanted to get a job I felt was fulfilling, I was going to have to give it to myself," said David. A few months later, New Mexico Tea Company was born.

New Mexico Tea Company imports and blends teas from around the world. "Tea is tea is tea, and like many business, we resell something that already exists in the world. What separates us is our knowledge, style, aesthetic and attention to detail. Many people tell us every day that our tea is the 'best' they've ever had, and this is not because we've found some secret source of the highest quality teas in the world... but because it's always fresh," said David.

New Mexico Tea Company only orders in small batches and rarely keeps things in stock for more than a month or two at a time. And because tea is all they do, David's business is able to stay focused and serve a niche market. "We basically surround our products in a blanket of caring," said David.

New Mexico Tea Company sells both online and in a physical storefront located in Albuquerque N.M.

"When I started the business, I had no experience with tea other than liking it on an enthusiast level. I soon found a space to rent and bought a bunch of products with a credit card. At this point, I had no way to pay the second month's rent if there weren't any sales. Things started quite slow, but we were able to stay afloat early on because our overhead was low," said David.

Shortly after opening his retail location, David realized that he was only making enough money to keep the store alive, so he "had to get a second job for part of the first year. I worked as a bouncer at a bar downtown on the weekends, and in the beginning, I worked at the tea store 7 days a week from 10 a.m. -- 6 p.m. before working downtown from 10 p.m. – 2 a.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays," said David.

Needless to say, David's schedule at that time was not sustainable. But as his tea business began to gain steam, David was able to quit his job as a bouncer and turn all of his attention toward growing New Mexico Tea Company.

"When I found 3dcart, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for. Why? Because it gave me control over the look and feel of my website without having to worry about backend functionality," said David.

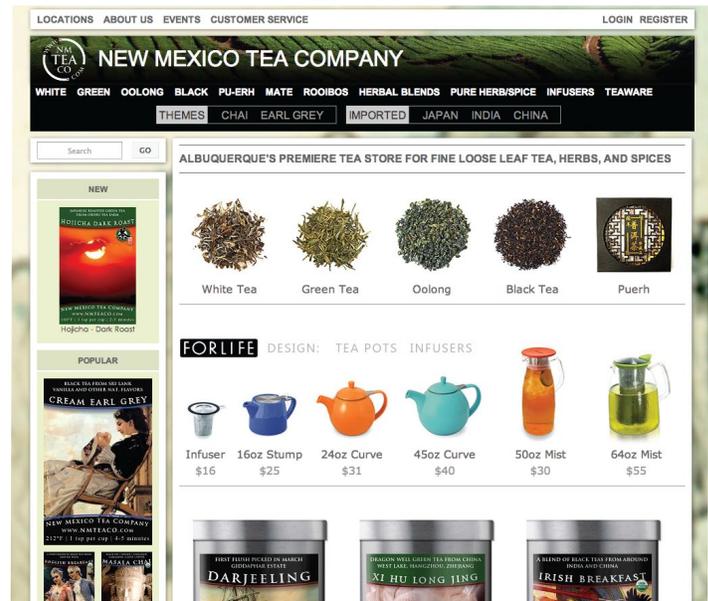
Since switching from ZenCart to 3dcart, David's business has taken off. "The online store and the physical store go hand in hand. Our everyday interactions with customers give our online presence heart, and our online store extends the reach of our physical store. Without one, I don't feel the other could be successful," said David.

Since opening a 3dcart store nearly five years ago, New Mexico Tea Company has seen continued growth. This year, David is projecting a 100% online sales increase over last year.

"New Mexico Tea Company has been able to grow its online presence thanks to our custom newsletter and word of mouth. About six months after we opened, I noticed that approximately 10 percent of people were signing up for our newsletter. I soon came to realize that I was not offering customers anything in trade for their electronic attention, so we started a program -- that lasts even now -- and this program is one of the single reasons we're still open.

About one year after opening an online store with Zen Cart, the United States Postal Service changed their API, a change that caused David's shipping module to break. And since it was going to require manual upgrades to get it working again, he decided it was time to find a hosted solution that would handle the backend operations of his business more effectively.

Everyone who is on our email list gets a free sample of tea each month, and now about 90% of our online shoppers sign up for the newsletter," said David.



David's long term goal for New Mexico Tea Company is to have 50 percent of yearly sales come from online, and "With 3dcarts continued dedication to adding features and fixing bugs in a timely manner, I'm sure this will be possible," said David.

When asked to offer advice to prospective online store owners who are interested in following his footsteps, David said "you need passion and focus. Without both, your business will never receive the care and attention it needs to grow."

Not every idea for an online store is as successful and cool as New Mexico Tea Company. However, as David's story shows us, all you need to thrive in the Ecommerce Ocean is flexibility and a willingness to continually respond to each new challenge as it arises.

For more information about New Mexico Tea Company or to shop in their incredible online store, please visit <http://www.nmteaco.com>