"With Accredo I can print a concise one page report that lets me see all the key stock information. It makes monitoring stock depletion a simple task."

Matt Anderson (left) Director, The Sleep Store with Accredo Qualified Support Person, Peter Smith of Foundation Independent Computer Services Ltd.

Thriving online business a dream come true with help from Accredo

When home-based business co-director Matt Anderson went looking for an accounting system he had some specific requirements to address. He wanted powerful inventory management, easy integration with his e-commerce operation and a solution that would scale to allow the business to grow.

The Sleep Store is a pure play e-commerce business that concentrates on providing the best products and advice regarding infant sleep. Founded with his wife Louise Tanguay, the business was launched in early 2006 and has become the 'go-to' resource for parents who want to get their newborns, infants or toddlers sleeping well.

"We survived for the first four years without an accounting system at all," says Anderson. "We relied on our accountant to meet all our tax obligations. But, we knew we needed a business management system – particularly if we wanted to meet the challenges we were facing as the business took off."

Anderson says his key pain points involved inventory management and the time intensive administration of the company's New Zealand and Australian websites. "We had two separately hosted sites at that

stage and there was a huge amount of duplication involved in keeping them both up to date. We knew we needed a new e-commerce platform, but we also wanted tight integration between the web shop and whatever financial system we decided to implement. This would give us much better control over inventory management and improved reporting."

These challenges provided the stimulus for The Sleep Store to re-platform to an e-commerce solution that integrated well with Accredo. Anderson says he had been aware of Accredo after doing research on e-commerce companies he admired.

"Several of the organisations I respected were running Accredo. I wanted a system that did more than compliance accounting; one that could stretch to handle back-end inventory management – whilst marrying snugly with our ecommerce operation."

Anderson settled on Total Communication's JBiz software for his e-business needs. It offered proven synchronization with accounting software and comprehensive inventory and live stock management. It enabled The Sleep Store to manage its Australian and New Zealand websites using one administration system – removing the

Thriving online business a dream come true with help from Accredo ...continued

time-consuming duplication needed to update stock across both sites.

"Previously, when we sold out of a product we would have to go into two separate websites and find a specific colour and size option and physically mark it unavailable for sale," says Anderson. "If we didn't do that quick enough we would keep selling stock that we didn't actually have – which sometimes led to awkward conversations with customers."

Conversely, stock could also arrive and sit on the floor without being entered for sale on the website. Better inventory management was essential.

Despite the fact that he was leaning towards Accredo, Anderson investigated other accounting providers. "We looked at Exonet, Xero and MYOB, but in the end we struggled to find customers using those systems running businesses similar to ours."

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Anderson did talk to fellow pure play online retailer Torpedo7, and discovered a happy Accredo customer. "Torpedo7 is an example of a company that has ramped up quickly and successfully and we wanted a system in place that would future-proof our business in a similar way. We needed a business management solution that could handle a quintupling in order volumes – a figure which we strive to be doing in five years time."

The Sleep Store first implemented Accredo in 2010, followed by JBiz almost a year later. "We were careful about bringing the two systems together. It was important to us that we got to know Accredo well before we integrated both solutions."

But once they did Anderson says the beneficial effects were immediate. Thanks to the scripting work of the Accredo support provider, Peter Smith of Foundation, all website orders are now imported into Accredo and invoices generated from the orders – automatically.

"This is stuff we always dreamed of having," says Anderson. "We can now provide customers with automatic order confirmation emails, and send them the courier company name and tracking number so they know exactly what is happening with their order."

As well as importing the orders, with Accredo up and running, ordered items are automatically deducted from stock and the web shop is updated accordingly. "Thanks to Accredo we now have live stock management, closely integrated with our e-commerce operation."

Anderson says the problem of overselling is now largely a thing of the past. "The synchronisation between the systems enables us to safely sell through items without having to watch the orders arrive and manually update stocked items accordingly. It's a great timesaver for us."

Accredo has also streamlined stock consignments. "As long as we have a purchase order in Accredo we can create a shipment, post the receipts and from that moment the stock is for sale. This increases stock turnaround and ensures we get things to market quickly."

As a growing home-based enterprise The Sleep Store has had to develop off-site storage and Anderson says Accredo helps ensure the stock in these locations is always visible.

"Accredo's Saturn product allows us to see stock in multiple locations. I can print a concise one page report that lets me see all the key stock information. It makes monitoring stock depletion a simple task."

He says his accounts administrator also endorses Accredo. "She has worked with a number of systems, but none better than Accredo. We can put any question to her and she is able to extract a report from the system which invariably answers our query."

Having a dedicated Accredo reseller on hand during the implementation allowed the business to get up to speed with the new system quickly, says Anderson. The provision of ongoing support has seen The Sleep Store make the most of Accredo's ability to be tailored to suit the unique demands of the business.

"It is a problem solving tool. Peter is very clever at creating scripts that automate business processes which result in less manual intervention. He not only dealt to the complexity of the order fulfillment process but also managed to transfer our existing loyalty program onto the Accredo customer file and synchronise that with the e-store so each customer can see their points balance when they log into the website.

"We continue to see good growth in order numbers and Accredo is providing the back end stability that allows us to focus hard on our logistics and marketing activities."

Accredo
taking care of business