

# OPTIONS

## LessBounce goes from strength to strength with OPTIONS

*Specialist Internet and Catalogue retailer expands business with systems from Options Mail Order*

LessBounce.com, a specialist supplier of sports bras that stocks the widest range of sizes in the world, was one of the first Internet retailers to set up shop ([www.lessbounce.com](http://www.lessbounce.com)).



Founded in 2001 by fitness expert, Selaine Saxby when she couldn't find a good sports bra locally, the company has grown at a rate of 15% year on year ever since. Although an early proponent of the Internet, Selaine soon discovered that many of her target market didn't have access to the internet. Customers that she met at shows like the World Aerobics Experience, Horse of the Year Show, Badminton, and the London Marathon wanted a paper-based catalogue. The first one was produced by Selaine on her computer, but she soon realised with rising demand, that she would have to become more streamlined and more professional.

### **An early solution**

As the business grew and Selaine found that she couldn't move for boxes of stock and spent too much of her time chasing

paperwork and at the post office sending parcels, she contacted Nick Wheeler of Charles Tyrwhitt to ask for some help and guidance. Nick was happy to meet Selaine and gave a lot of advice, including introducing her to the Options Mail Order system. To this day the company maintains its links with Charles Tyrwhitt, swapping notes on how to get the best out of the system.



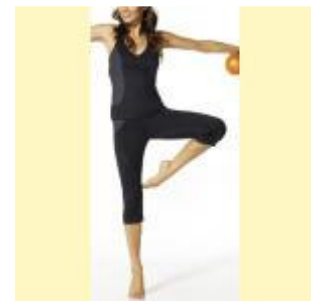
Selaine says, "We have been using OPTIONS to run our business since 2002. We were really very small then, but I took the plunge and purchased OPTIONS rather than employ an extra person, and the system has repaid us many times over since then."

### **From taking the order to taking the cash**

OPTIONS provides the platform for running the entire mail order business at LessBounce. All products are set up with

individual codes within OPTIONS and all stock for both the mail order and internet sides of the business is managed from within OPTIONS. Internet orders are compiled from the e-commerce system each morning and automatically interfaced with OPTIONS. The system then enables staff to pick and fulfil orders with all the associated paperwork including despatch notes, with pre-postage handling labels. Whilst LessBounce is not currently large enough to need pick lists and some of the other multiple warehouse functionality supplied by OPTIONS, they know it is there for such time when it is required.

All credit card transactions are processed through OPTIONS. Returns, of which there are many due to the nature of the product, are handled by OPTIONS, with refunds being automatically repaid to the appropriate customer credit or debit card.



# OPTIONS

## **Streamlined stock management**

LessBounce takes on average 2500 orders per month, they are counter-seasonal, which means that they are very busy after Christmas and at other times of the year, when traditional retailers tend to be quiet. OPTIONS enables the company to manage purchase orders with suppliers, and when the stock comes in to allocate to the oldest orders first.



However, the system also has a very useful override feature, where some orders can be assigned a higher priority. For example, if a woman needs a bra urgently, as she has just had surgery, she will be given top priority.

Selaine explains, "The stock management feature within OPTIONS has enabled us to be very efficient with our stock control. For instance, when the Daily Mail mentioned the Triumph Extreme sports bra in a feature last year, resulting in the bra selling out within a day, LessBounce was able to

manage all the back orders for the bra in the UK on behalf of Triumph and allocate stock to the orders. We were even able to liaise with the European suppliers directly and then inform customers exactly when their orders would be fulfilled."

## **Delightful customer service**

While the huge order levels generated by the Daily Mail incident was unusual, the level of service that LessBounce customers enjoy is just as high every day. As soon as the orders are accepted into OPTIONS, the system automatically generates an email to the customer acknowledging receipt of the order. If the product is out of stock, or on a delayed delivery they will be informed at this time. Once the products have been dispatched the customer receives another email, alerting them to the fact, and their payment card is debited.

In addition, customers are able to ring a freefone number to check the status of their order. The staff taking the calls are immediately able to pinpoint the order in OPTIONS and give an update to the customer. LessBounce also runs a 'Fitness Professionals Club' where people that

run their own gym or aerobics club have a special code entitling them to discounts when they shop.

## **Powerful management reporting**

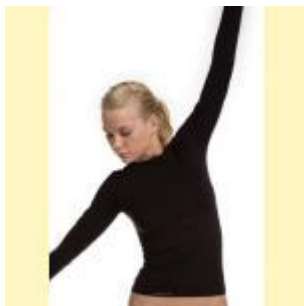
Due to the high number of relatively low value transactions, LessBounce extract sales data from OPTIONS to input into their Sage accounting system on a monthly basis. Similarly the company deals with huge numbers of SKUs, for instance, one bra could be in five different colours and 40 different sizes. So when reporting on sales, Selaine is able to group products and data so that she can analyse sales across an entire style, for instance, all Shock Absorbers in black. This gives an overall picture of the business with the detail available for further analysis as required. Selaine comments, "The reports are presented in a graphical format so I can see at a glance how different lines or product styles are doing. We can also see history and see trends emerging which is critical for planning our forward ordering."



# OPTIONS

## Support from Options

The system is easy and intuitive to use, so that remove old ones, change prices and change product information. When glitches to the system occur, Options provides support. The Options helpdesk is able to dial into the LessBounce server, fix whatever the problem is and then they send Selaine an email to explain what they have done. Selaine comments, "When you are too small to have your own dedicated in-house IT resource it is so good to know that help is at hand should things go wrong."



## The results speak for themselves

Since launching LessBounce, the company

even new members of staff are able to use the system from day one with and Selaine and won many awards. The most high-profile being when Selaine was announced Wessex Business Woman of the year in 2003. In 2004 LessBounce was Wiltshire Business of the Year and in 2008 the team won the Customer Service Award from the Salisbury and District Chamber of Commerce.

Selaine comments, 'If a mail order or multi-channel retail, no matter how small, is confident that they are going to grow, then they should do their level best to get a system as soon as they possibly can. It saves so much time and heartache later on. If you can't afford it all at once, you should work out what you will need, and ensure that you get all the right parts so that they work together and integrate well.'

minimal training. It is simple to create new products,



Selaine goes on to say, "Having the OPTIONS system has definitely helped LessBounce to grow quicker than we would otherwise have been able. It has saved so much manpower when we have been growing fast, and it has saved us from descending into chaos during our most busy periods. Most importantly it has enabled us to keep a keen eye on stock ensuring we maintain profits and provide an excellent level of service to our customers."

Options Mail Order Software Ltd  
Tel: 01844 211 830 Fax: 01844 217 465  
E-mail: [enquiries@options-mailorder.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@options-mailorder.co.uk)