

Shipping Service Helps Kayak Retailer Reach Global Customers

Size and weight restrictions severely limited Colorado Kayak's ability to sell overseas. Bongo International stepped in to help.

By Missy Baxter
Contributing writer,
RetailCustomerExperience.com

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The players

Colorado Kayak Supply, located in Buena Vista, Color., in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, is one of America's largest whitewater rafting supply companies. Through its Web site, the company attracts customers from around the world, including many international consumers who want to purchase large items such as kayaks, paddles and camping gear.

Bongo International, a provider of international e-commerce solutions based in Bridgeport, Conn., cuts shipping costs for consumers and reduces risk to retailers. The company uses fraud-screening tools to allow qualified international customers to establish a U.S. address at Bongo's international processing center. By using Bongo, international shoppers can purchase U.S. goods and combine their orders from various retailers into one consolidated shipment.

The challenge

When Colorado Kayak Supply launched its Web site and began sailing in international waters, orders quickly flooded

in from around the globe. Unfortunately, the company's expansion into the global market was severely limited by shipping regulations that restrict the size and weight of products that can be sent overseas.

"The cost and complications of shipping kayaks, paddles and other large products overseas was cutting into our potential profits," said Dave Kloberdanz, general manager of Colorado Kayak. "We didn't want international customers to be discouraged from purchasing large items, so we knew we needed to find a solution."



Shipping regulations hampered Colorado Kayak's ability to sell kayaks internationally.



The unusual size and shape of kayaks and paddles made it difficult for Colorado Kayak to ship internationally; Bongo International offered a solution that increased Colorado Kayak's capacity to sell globally as well as provided the retailer with fraud protection.

Kloberdanz also wanted to take proactive measures to protect his company from skyrocketing rates of postal fraud and identity theft, which cost U.S. companies millions in profits each year.

As if the risk of fraud isn't daunting enough, tapping into the global market also poses other challenges. For example, customers in some countries may be restricted or prohibited from engaging in commerce with the United States on any level. Some retailers take on these risks without doing the proper research, which could result in lost revenue, hefty fines and possible imprisonment.

Steering clear of such problems was important for Colorado Kayak. Plus, the company wanted to avoid hiring additional staff to deal with exchange rates, custom laws,

damage complaints, export licenses, certificates of origin and other paperwork required for international shipments.

The solution

For some companies, the task of tapping into the global market can be overwhelming, but Colorado Kayak was determined to find a safe way to navigate international waters.

The answer was Bongo International. Now customers from overseas who visit Colorado Kayak's Web site can simply click on the Bongo International logo to register for a shipping account.

The Web site application provides the international buyer with his own U.S. address, which directs parcels to Bongo's

International Processing Center. Merchandise can be stored at the warehouse for 45 days at no extra charge. That allows customers to consolidate parcels and reduce shipping fees.

“Bongo’s solution is the only parcel forwarding solution that provides a screening tool to ensure the retailer is getting a fraud-free purchase,” said Greg Sack, Bongo International’s president of sales.

If the retailer provides a tracking number, Bongo also can track shipments and address any transit delays that may arise. For a small fee, customers also can request digital photos of items prior to shipping.

The results

By teaming up with Bongo International, Colorado Kayak has experienced increased foreign sales, reduced risk of loss from fraud and improved customer satisfaction.

“We’ve gotten a lot of positive feedback from customers about the ease of using Bongo,” Kloberdanz said, noting that frequent shoppers are especially pleased with the ability to consolidate orders from various U.S. retailers into one shipment.

“This really is a convenient, affordable way for international customers to buy products from all over the U.S.,” he said.

Kloberdanz says the partnership with Bongo has resulted in substantial savings on shipping costs and labor. Plus, the company didn’t have to hire additional staff to oversee international shipping or build an export management system, which would have cost more than \$50,000.

“Working with Bongo has turned out to be a really great business decision. They take care of the shipping so we can concentrate on other things to improve our customers’ experience.”

— Dave Kloberdanz, general manager, Colorado Kayak

“It really takes a big weight off our shoulders to let Bongo handle the shipping for our international orders,” he said. “Working with Bongo has turned out to be a really great business decision. They take care of the shipping so we can concentrate on other things to improve our customers’ experience.”

By partnering with Bongo International to ship merchandise, Colorado Kayak has sold dozens of kayaks, paddles and other merchandise to clients in Italy, Norway and Japan.

About the sponsor: *Bongo International is a premier provider of international shopping cart solutions to help retailers expand their business to international consumers. Bongo’s integrated application easily can be implemented on a retailer’s site through the use of hyperlinks, converting international consumers into fraud-free domestic orders. By providing a consolidation point for U.S. orders, Bongo can save the international consumer 82 percent off common carrier rates. Bongo International’s application is currently active on more than 600 U.S. retail Web sites. Bongo International’s Web site can be found at www.BongoUS.com.*