



# NitroSell eCommerce

## Customer Solution Case Study



### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Retail

### Customer Profile

Two Seattle mothers founded tottini to sell modern children's furnishings from a well-appointed physical store and Web site.

### Business Situation

The company's first WebStore, stitched together from third-party solutions that included PHP based X-cart, a stand-alone RMS data to Web module and some ad-hoc Web design, came at the "right price" but only copied store inventory to the Web, leaving the business struggling to manage customer expectations

### Solution

NitroSell software and services now fully integrate all Web transaction data to and from Microsoft® Retail Management System. Data and changes are entered once, not multiple times.

### Benefits

- Overall (online and in-store) revenue jumped.
- Web sales tripled to 15 percent of gross.
- Full system payback in six months.
- Staff do updates in minutes that once took a technologist three hours.
- Nearby customers select items online, then arrive ready to buy.

"We went from what was, in effect a backstreet location on the Internet, to a 'Fifth Avenue' location in terms of search engine rankings, courtesy of NitroSell"

"Tottini's Web traffic more than tripled, as did online sales. Switching to NitroSell's software plus services gave us an Enterprise class WebStore at small business pricing, that is fully integrated with Microsoft Dynamics Retail Management System"

Mike Van Flandern, tottini

Mellissa Maffei and Melissa Van Flandern vowed to fill a retail vacuum in Seattle. On busy Yale Avenue North, they opened tottini in 2004 to sell modern children's furnishings. Tottini stocked 8,000 SKUs for newborns, toddlers and busy parents. Microsoft Dynamics Retail Management System (RMS) and Microsoft Small Business Accounting tracked customer records, sales and every retail aspect of the physical store. But tottini's first e-commerce solution (stitched together from third-party solutions that included a PHP based X-cart, a stand-alone RMS data to Web module and some ad-hoc Web design) only copied Web data into the store database. Technologist Mike Van Flandern spent undue hours Web-publishing each new item. Staff did double-work maintaining products, changing prices, and tracking stockouts. To avoid wasting and paying for all that time, tottini had to remove most items from the site. Then Mike learned NitroSell software plus services would thoroughly integrate Web and physical retailing. Today, staff spend minutes, not hours. Revenue keeps rising and Web sales tripled to hit 15 percent of total. The new NitroSell-Microsoft system paid for itself in its first six months. And everyone spends more time with customers.



“We made back our investment in the NitroSell-Microsoft system in less than six months. Its first year alone has more than paid for five years of service.”

Melissa Van Flandern, Co-owner, tottini

### Situation

In 2004, Melissa Van Flandern and Melissa Maffei founded tottini in Seattle, Washington, to fill its near vacuum of a modern children's furnishings store. Beyond innovative design and smart colors from around the world, tottini products emphasize child safety, sustainability, and eco-consciousness.

Its 8,000 SKUs enrich children and parents' lives around the clock with products for bathing, dressing, feeding, playing, napping, reading, traveling, sleeping, and decor. Manufacturers include Monte Design, Argington, Oeuf, DwellStudio, Boon, and Skip Hop.

Rather than devoting separate areas to cribs, chairs or accessories, tottini's 1,400 square feet display products in “vignettes,” coordinated ensembles that integrate decorating themes.

To enhance service, tottini invests in two checkout lanes, a gift registry,

gift-wrapping, gift certificates, at-cost shipping, frequent promotional discounts, and a recently updated—and now very successful—Web store. Dedicated spaces for nursing, diaper changing, and playtime ensure child-friendly shopping. The store has won Best of Seattle awards in 2006, 2007, and 2008.

As tottini was their first retail experience, owners wanted the safety and ease of Microsoft products. They chose Microsoft Dynamics Retail Management System (RMS) and Microsoft Small Business Accounting.

### Unraveling the Web

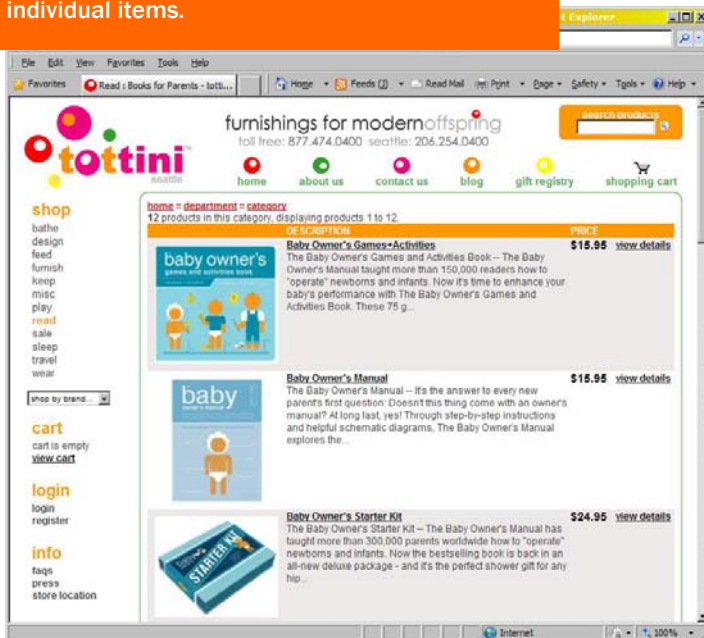
But finding well-designed Web store software wasn't so easy. Husband Mike Van Flandern, a technologist and .ASP programmer, got the time-eating job of structuring, building, posting and keeping tottini products current in the Web store. “I could have built a Web store from scratch,” he says. “But it's not worth that large investment of time when others have already made the product.

“I looked at scores of Web store solutions, but only two claimed to integrate Web inventory and sales with Microsoft Dynamics RMS. Keeping 3,200 products current on our site would be a constant chore with disparate databases and double entries.”

“Unfortunately, not all ‘integrated’ Web stores are created equal,” says Mike. Their first Web store, stitched together from third-party solutions that included PHP-based X-cart, a stand-alone RMS-data-to-Web module and some ad-hoc Web design, “came at the right price but only copied store inventory to the Web. We needed more capability than just import.

“Its biggest disappointment was not keeping store and Web inventories in sync, but it didn't end there. We have a mixture of special-order gifts and furniture we show on the Web even though they're not always in stock. That first ecommerce solution turned out to be an endless customization project and even forced us into one blanket policy for all out-of-stock items: Show all or Show none. Stores need more flexibility.

NitroSell's complete eCommerce solution lets even new customers intuitively “drill down” by department, then by product category, to individual items.



“Under NitroSell, online sales jumped from five percent of total sales to 15 percent. And our cost per Web sale is far less than the same fully loaded sale in our nicely appointed store.”

Melissa Van Flandern, Co-owner, tottini

“These deficiencies impacted customers and sales. Too often, our Web store sold more of a fast-selling product than we had. That required apologetic emails to frustrated customers who wanted a product in time for a shower or birthday. To avoid that, our old Web store made us remove most products from the Web. It’s hard to sell what customers can’t see.

“Beyond that, staff spent too much time resizing images, entering and maintaining redundant data, such as shipping and sales tax, and reentering Web customers’ names and sales into Microsoft Dynamics RMS. “We needed full-business integration. But we still had to separate store from site at will for sales or marketing reports.

“X-cart is a good basic shopping cart, but does a poor job of abstracting its features from its templates. What that means in practice is that even minor necessary customizations make X-cart updates an expensive nightmare.

“Only a few companies claim to integrate it with RMS, and those integrations are too basic for running a proper multi-channel business.

“Even I was spending way too much time on technical issues, and other retailers aren’t technologists.”

### Solution

Because Microsoft Dynamics RMS and Microsoft Small Business Accounting had proved optimum for retail management, any replacement Web store had to seamlessly trade data in and out of the Microsoft SQL Server database, which those products used. It would have to save staff the extra steps they spent on their first Web store.

“We wanted *many* more time-savers,” says Mike. “We need full integration between Web and store. We wanted to fully manage a product—for the Web or store—on one screen. To see daily sales of a hundred SKUs in their totals without reentering data. We wanted to customize the site to our brand and be confident of software updates. We’d had enough of X-cart’s functional and security updates continuously bringing our multi-channel operations to a screeching halt.”

### All Specs Satisfied

“Only NitroSell software plus services delivered our entire wish-list,” Mike states. “After using it hands-on, I was sold. It thoroughly integrated with Microsoft Dynamics RMS. It combined our inventory, sales reports cashflow, customer records—you name it.

“NitroSell’s standard store site looked good and gave customers great drill-down capabilities. Its Web store went up fast and is transparently intuitive for customers. We customize it in-house. NitroSell’s tools, documentation and support are second to none.

“NitroSell’s gift registry is a financial must and its Product Attribute Manager resolves our earlier inventory data management challenges.”

### Benefits

“Tottini’s Web traffic more than tripled, as did online sales,” says Mike. “NitroSell’s gift registry—and resolving our backorder problem—have clearly raised our sales revenue. I spend far less time working on our site because NitroSell is very self-sufficient. It’s no comparison how much faster we now Web-publish new products, change prices, or can let NitroSell automatically manage Web

Clean lines and easy-to-clean surfaces of this rugged Ecotots children’s table typify the modern and sensible designs at tottini.



## For More Information

For more information about tottini products and services, call (877) 474-0400 or (206) 254-0400 or visit the Web site at:

[www.tottini.com](http://www.tottini.com)

For more information about NitroSell software and services, call:

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### Microsoft Products and Services

Call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400.

To access information on Dynamics RMS, go to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/dynamics/rms>

or

<http://www.microsoft.com/dynamics/pos>

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ISV/Software Solutions



## Software plus Services

- NitroSell eCommerce  
- on-premise software plus cloud services.
- Microsoft Dynamics Retail Management System (RMS)

stock. It does the hard stuff and we focus on customers.”

Under NitroSell,” says Maffei, “Web sales jumped from five to 15 percent of total. And online sales cost us far less than the same fully loaded sale in our nicely appointed store. It’s also logical that a customer who has pre-shopped our site can spend five minutes with a store associate, not 20. That means faster service, happier customers, and only having extra staff on the floor when really needed.”

### Return on Investment (ROI)

“We made back our investment in the NitroSell-Microsoft system in less than six months,” says Melissa Van Flandern. “Its first year alone has more than paid for five years of service. We get a 300% boost in our search engine rankings because of NitroSell’s out-of-the box SEO. We went from what was, in effect a backstreet location on the Internet, to a ‘Fifth Avenue’ location in terms of search engine rankings, courtesy of NitroSell.”

Mike adds, “Even being a programmer, without NitroSell I’d outsource Web tasks that were too complex or too repetitive. With our first e-commerce software, I’d spend three hours uploading new products or changing prices. Using NitroSell, retail associates do it for me in a fraction of that time.”

### Free Advice from Successful Web Retailers

Maffei says, “Every retailer has to grasp that having a Web store is no longer just ‘a good idea.’ It’s a retail necessity.

“But be sure your POS system really, fully, completely integrates your customers, transactions, and inventories from Web and physical stores. Why would you pay for double work in different sales venues?” “Do what we wish we’d done first time. Install NitroSell solution immediately with Microsoft Dynamics RMS.”

“Next, we plan on expanding our physical and Web stores. NitroSell will help us grow and customize our site to keep it exciting, fresh, and, above all, a positive shopping experience,” says Melissa Van Flandern.

### NitroSell

NitroSell makes it easy for retailers to increase their profits by extending their business with online multi-channel sales solutions. NitroSell customers benefit from a unique combination of on-premise software plus cloud-based services working seamlessly together to give them a competitive advantage.

NitroSell customer numbers are increasing every month. NitroSell has sold S+S solutions to Web-enable more than 1,400 retail businesses across the US, Europe and beyond. The number of NitroSell registered end-user accounts broke the 2 million mark in Sept 2008 and more than 900,000 individual products are for sale across the NitroSell WebStore base, which attracts almost three million unique visits per month.

NitroSell sells its award-winning solutions exclusively through its network of resellers and partners. NitroSell eCommerce is both a complete “off-the-shelf” solution and a Web technology platform on which Web designers and systems integrators can build solutions. The company empowers and partners a 260-strong reseller channel via its state-of-the-art provisioning and self-service Web based Partner Portal.