

BASIC OUTFITTERS SURVIVES 'SHARK TANK EFFECT'



Entrepreneurs don't always come away with an investment after getting a chance to pitch their business to a panel of tycoons on the popular [Shark Tank](#) business-themed TV reality show. Even so, the visibility often spurs a huge spike in web sales and inquiries. That "Shark Tank Effect" could easily crash the servers of an unprepared contestant, which would be a disastrous outcome to a great marketing opportunity.

When [Basic Outfitters](#) co-founders and husband-and-wife team Michael and Laura Dweck got the opportunity to appear, sales jumped 1,000% between December 2016 and January 2017, when their segment aired. Since then, Basic Outfitters has continued to see 25% month-over-month sales growth.

The business was an idea born out of necessity. When Michael and Laura moved into a cozy Manhattan apartment, they had limited closet space. As they tell it, Laura quickly commandeered five of the six dresser drawers, leaving Michael with only one for his socks, tees, and underwear. That spurred the idea to provide affordable, high-quality men's basics for the middle market and create the company's Create-a-Drawer™ service, which lets shoppers choose up to 10 pairs of socks, three pairs of underwear, three undershirts, and a pair of sweatpants for only \$60.

Since its launch in November 2015, the ecommerce venture has claimed a sizable stake in an already saturated market and become a media darling. In addition to the *Shark Tank* episode, the couple was named to the [Forbes 30 Under 30](#) list and has been featured by several high-profile media outlets.

BUILDING FOR SUCCESS

In the retail arena, small business comes with a price—fulfilling expectations and demand requires an ability to scale up, or risk disappointing customers.

The vision behind Basic Outfitters was to make the shopping experience fun, easy, and convenient, explains founder and President Michael Dweck. "The data out there shows that men keep their basics on average for seven years," he says, because they dread the hassle of going to a department store. He and his wife saw an opportunity to provide affordable, high-quality men's basics for the middle market.

The couple interviewed several web design agencies to find one that could deliver the functionality they needed on a startup budget. They eventually teamed with New York-based Synapse Consulting Group to identify the right ecommerce platform and build an inviting, scalable retail site for the fledgling brand.

"We determined Magento would be the best option for the short and long term," says Jordan Braha, ecommerce architect at Synapse. He also recommended a Rackspace cloud hosting solution with Redis hosted instances to achieve both reliability and scalability in anticipation of future growth.

RIDING THE WAVE

When Michael Dweck got word that Basic Outfitters would be featured on ABC's popular television show *Shark Tank*, he and Braha discussed a strategy to handle the expected traffic spike.

Rackspace gathered input from the technicians, engineers, and database teams, to ensure that the needed tools were in place and the servers could take the hit.

"Load testing was not an option, based on the timeline available and what it would have taken to get the right information, so we had to play it ultra safe," Braha says. The event went off without a hitch and accommodated the sales surge. Since then, Basic Outfitters has continued to employ a broad spectrum of Rackspace resources for hosting and data technology.

Michael Dweck advises other would-be entrepreneurs to do extensive research before launching an online venture, and to surround themselves with people they trust. For more on surviving a "Shark Tank Event," click [here](#).