

## Fast-growing Volusion hiring workers, looking for bigger Austin headquarters

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**Fast-growing e-commerce software maker Volusion Inc. is hiring workers and searching for a bigger headquarters as it prepares for expansion.**

**A new \$7 million line of credit from Silicon Valley Bank is enabling the latest push, said CEO Clay Olivier.**

**"We've been growing so fast we've had to rip out cubicles and put in tables so people have a place to sit," Olivier said. "We need room to grow, and we're excited about finding a new home that lets us do that."**

Founded in 1999, Volusion develops "shopping cart" software that lets customers build online stores. They can update product information, offer online coupons, handle credit card transactions and track inventory all in one place.

Customers also can add online stores to their Facebook pages and offer daily online deals.

The company operates 25,000 active stores for a customer list that includes National Geographic, Disney and the University of Michigan, as well as thousands of small businesses.

Originally based in both Simi Valley, Calif., and Austin, Volusion consolidated its offices here in January. About 30 California employees relocated as a result.

"Having everyone under one roof has really improved our speed of execution. Challenges that used to take us weeks to solve can now be handled in one face-to-face meeting," Olivier said. "Plus, there's a lot more technical talent here, which is what we're craving."

**In addition to the relocations, the company has hired 60 people in the past six months, bringing its workforce to 215.**

**It wants to add at least 50 more by year's end in positions including product development, sales, business development, marketing and customer service.**

To accommodate its larger workforce, the company is looking for 45,000 square feet of space, almost double the size of its current offices in Northwest Austin.

Volusion reported revenue of \$22 million in 2009 but no longer discloses financial information.

Olivier said the company has experienced substantial growth since then but declined to disclose details. Volusion, which is self-funded, has been profitable for the past six years, he said.

"We get contacted three or four times per week by venture firms, but fortunately we haven't needed it," Olivier said. The bank line of credit "lets us expand without giving up equity to venture capitalists."

Scott Downey, a relationship manager at Silicon Valley Bank, said Volusion's track record enabled it to secure the line of credit.

"We got really good feedback from VCs that have looked at the company, we really like the management team, and their financial performance has been very strong," Downey said.

Volusion competes in a crowded market, with rivals including giants Yahoo and eBay's ProStores Inc., as well as dozens of small players, some of which give away their products. Volusion charges a monthly fee, with most customers paying \$19 to \$150 a month.

What sets Volusion apart, Olivier said, is its around-the-clock customer service.

"You call us, and you will always get somebody on the phone," he said. "A key reason we moved everybody to Texas is that I'm from here and I believe a lot in Southern hospitality. Our customer support people work at our headquarters; we don't outsource."

Customer service is a big reason Yacht Outfitters, an Austin-based online retailer, chose Volusion three years ago to build and run its e-store, said owner Stephen Ovalle.

"This is our first online store, and we didn't have any experience creating a website," Ovalle said. "We met with a designer, spent time talking about what we wanted to accomplish, and they made it happen."

As the store got off the ground, Ovalle was a frequent tech support caller.

"They always took the time to hear what the issue was and work you through it," he said. "I come from an IT background, and I'm very familiar with help desks."

"I truly believe either you have customer service skills or you don't — it's really hard to fake being interested in helping someone. When your website is your livelihood, that's the kind of support you want."

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### **Volusion Inc. at a glance**

**What:** E-commerce software maker

**Employees:** 215

**Expansion plans:** Hiring at least 50 employees across all areas; seeking 45,000-square-foot headquarters

**Customers:** National Geographic, Disney, University of Michigan and thousands of small businesses

**Funding:** Self-funded; recently secured a \$7 million line of credit from Silicon Valley Bank

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**