



“It’s a no brainer” — why this product business decided to make the move to DEAR Systems

If you’re wondering about whether to migrate from TradeGecko or another inventory management system, DEAR Systems might just be the perfect solution. Find out why DEAR was a perfect fit for Profood.



Summary

Profood is a Hong Kong based importer and distributor of artisanal foods, mainly from Europe. They sell wholesale (B2B) and direct-to-consumer (D2C) via their Shopify store.

Profood first discovered DEAR when shopping around for an inventory management system to replace Profood's antiquated, server-based IMS. The requirements were simple: all their stock needed to be in one place, for all channels, and their IMS had to be an all-in-one solution that worked with Xero.

They had to choose between TradeGecko and DEAR, and after trialling both programs, DEAR suited their needs much better.

DEAR now powers wholesale sales and is hooked up directly to Shopify for D2C sales.

But it's not just the nuts-and-bolts of inventory management that DEAR helps Profood with; it's the ability to effortlessly and

quickly scale systems depending on business needs — or ambitions.

“The ease with which you can scale your business is incredible,” Tamara Augusta, GM of Profood, says.

With the news that Intuit is sunsetting the standalone QuickBooks Commerce / TradeGecko product, Profood's implementation partner Adrian Lai of Cornerstone Management Group says that the time to make the switch to a new IMS is now.

“Migrate over from TradeGecko over to DEAR? It's literally a no brainer. I hope you do it,” Adrian says. “For most small businesses, including training, you're talking at most three weeks, usually done in two weeks if setup data is clean.”





Business Type

Ecommerce

Industry

Food & Beverage

Size

1 - 5 Employees

Region

Hong Kong

Integrations

Xero, Shopify

DEAR Customer Since

2016

Challenges

- Fragmented stock records, no way to track batch numbers or expiration dates, and labour-intensive processes dependent on server-based legacy software and spreadsheets
- Multiple channels, both wholesale (B2B) and D2C ecommerce, with the same warehouse and stock for each
- No connection between inventory and accounts, leading to difficulties performing accounting tasks like assessing COGS (cost of goods sold)
- Faced with an excess of choice, not sure about what IMS to use, and unsure of how best to implement

Solutions

- A single system of record for all inventory that's cloud-native, accessible from anywhere, and that saves users time and mental energy by making tricky tasks easy
- A system that serves multiple channels by acting as a single source of truth for all inventory, no matter how it gets sold
- Connected inventory and accounting, making it easy to keep track of the numbers, assess profitability, make sure everything is coded correctly, and stay on top of compliance
- Trialling two inventory systems side-by-side to find out which one was best, with implementation handled by a trusted partner

Results

- Inventory is accurate and the business runs from anywhere. "I can be on holiday back home and do this. I don't have to physically be in the office at all."
- Everything connects: DEAR connects to Shopify and Xero, making the inventory and accounts a light-touch system that any staff member can do
- Time saved across the whole business: Profood can concentrate on building their business instead of being absorbed by time-costly manual tasks. "I love how easy DEAR is."

Food for thought

When Italian-Austrian Brand & Communications Consultant Tamara Agusta went out for dinner one night in Hong Kong, she wasn't expecting to finish her meal with a new role at a brand new company — but that's exactly how she came to be the General Manager of Profood Limited.

Profood is a Hong Kong based importer and distributor of artisanal foods, mainly from Europe. They sell wholesale (B2B) and direct-to-consumer (D2C) via their Shopify store. When Tamara arrived, she threw herself into a new industry, and used the skills she'd acquired at previous startups

to restructure the fledgling company, increasing both their marketing and sales, and moving their accounting software to the cloud.

“ We started using Xero and it just made sense to look for an inventory solution that was also cloud-based, and could talk to all the different outlets or channels that we had going and unify the business, ” Tamara remembers.

She knew what Profood needed, but she found herself faced with a choice - which cloud-based inventory management system to choose?

DEAR vs TradeGecko: trade-offs not accepted

Tamara first discovered DEAR when she was shopping around for an inventory management system to replace Profood's antiquated, server-based IMS. Her requirements were simple: she wanted all their stock to be in one place, for all channels, and for their IMS to be an all-in-one solution.

After a while, she'd narrowed the choice down to TradeGecko and DEAR Systems.

“ TradeGecko ended up being one of the platforms that I trialled because it had decent reviews and it looked snazzy, it looked user friendly, it looked like it had all the things I needed. But actually it didn't have the most important aspect for me, ” Tamara says.

Profood's inventory management implementation partner, Adrian Lai at Cornerstone Management group, offered a simple solution: trial both programs, and see which worked best.

Adrian has over eight years experience with integrating various inventory management systems for product companies. He says that, although he recommends DEAR to his customers, when a client can't decide between competing inventory management systems, it's worth trying both to see what works for the business - and DEAR Systems usually wins.

“I say to the business owner, don't take my word for it. We'll do a parallel run, take the things you want to do, put them into TradeGecko and do the same thing in DEAR Systems. We'll plug both of those programs into Xero, and you can judge for yourself,” Adrian says.



“So we’ll put simple workflows together — sales, sales credits, purchases, purchase credits, cancellations — and by comparing outputs, it’s just really too easy to make a decision to switch across to DEAR,” Adrian adds. “If you’re paying a similar amount of money for a product, well, why don’t you choose a superior one?”

From the trial, it was clear to Tamara that TradeGecko lacked key features that DEAR had right out of the box, as well as offering the customizability and flexibility Tamara wanted for the business.

Adrian says that DEAR ticks all the boxes for many small to medium product businesses - and it’s great from an implementation partner perspective too.

When you’re helping a small business with their accounts, it’s important that their data flow well across platforms, particularly between the inventory management system / ERP and the accounting software.

“The big thing for me is the logical workflows. That’s one massive unique selling point.



The ease of integrations — for example, implementation from an e-commerce point of view. The reporting in DEAR makes much more sense than in TradeGecko. I also like the B2B portal,” Adrian says.

“But I find that the ultimate USP is that sure, DEAR does offer all these sorts of integrations, but it’s an ERP at its core, so that you don’t need too many other integrations in order to start working.”

“ In terms of inventory management, I love how easy DEAR Systems is. It’s just very useful and intuitive and hassle-free. ” - Tamara Agusta, General Manager, Profood

Tamara does all of Profood’s inventory management through DEAR, which powers wholesale sales and is hooked up directly to Shopify for D2C sales.

“DEAR has centralized my inventory tracking in all the ways that we’re connected,” Tamara says. “From the online shop, to our accounting, and more — they all talk to each other, and that’s great. It was exactly what we needed and I haven’t looked back since”

To set up their wholesale systems, Profood have used templates provided out of the box by DEAR, as well as building and customizing their own templates (helped by their implementation partner, Cornerstone Management Group.) For a wholesale sale, Tamara will generate an invoice directly in DEAR. Once the customer has paid, the automated checks and balances in DEAR

mean Tamara never has to worry about sending out an order that hasn’t been paid for.

“A good thing in DEAR is that it’s very intuitive to see at what stage of a sale you are,” Tamara says. “It’s hard to miss a sale, it’s hard to forget to deliver it to someone or it’s hard to forget someone hasn’t paid because DEAR so neatly displays and tracks for you. In terms of inventory management, I love how easy DEAR is.”

With ecommerce sales, it’s even easier. A direct integration with Shopify means all ecommerce sales automatically generate an invoice in DEAR, which flows through to Profood’s accounting system, Xero. It’s a simple, low-touch system, and it means that Profood is able to run the business without needing to spend money on staff whose only jobs would be moving products around. With DEAR taking care of the busy-work, they’re able to concentrate on building out their operations.

“We’re saving a lot of money with DEAR Systems,” Tamara says. “Any of our staff who know how to use DEAR can go in and generate an invoice, a delivery note, a purchase order, whatever they need.”



Flexible keeps DEAR stickable

Profood says the flexibility inherent in DEAR made it easy to stick with them once they'd made their decision. Even as the business grows, or requirements change, DEAR has no trouble keeping up.

Tamara is able to easily do things that are pain points in many ERP or IMS systems, like quickly assess COGS (cost of goods sold), track batch numbers and expiration dates, and even break down shipments for bulk or single sale. "It's easy to assemble and disassemble items. For example, if I'm making a hamper, I can pick all the items that I'll need, and DEAR will create a new SKU and we can go into production for that hamper. It's just very useful and intuitive and hassle-free."

DEAR also helps Profood effortlessly manage stock transfers, and makes sure that stock can't be ordered before it's available

for dispatch. It also works for consignment — for instance, if Profood lends a customer a coffee machine to go with a coffee sale, they can track where it currently is, who has it, and what parts currently belong with it. Different pricing tiers for wholesale and D2C are handled effortlessly, as are different units of measurement.

But it's not just the nuts-and-bolts of inventory management that DEAR helps Profood with; it's the ability to effortlessly and quickly scale systems depending on business needs — or ambitions.

"The ease with which you can scale your business is incredible," Tamara says. "For instance, maybe you're a distributor like us, and now you want to launch a private label, which means going into production. You don't need to rethink your whole inventory strategy or get another IMS. You can start doing your production in DEAR."

“ We’re saving a lot of money with DEAR Systems ”

- *Tamara Agusta,*
General Manager, Profood

DEAR helps Profood cope with Covid-19

DEAR’s flexibility also means that shocks are far easier to handle. The sudden onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the measures required to contain it, sent many product businesses scrambling. How would they deal with the new constrictions on movement, on importing and exporting goods, on the dramatic change in market-channel emphasis?

It turns out that product businesses with a solid, cloud-based inventory management solution had a head-start on everyone else. Often, this was the difference between oblivion, survival, or even thriving in the radically altered conditions. For Profood, when Covid came, DEAR made all the difference. “I can be on holiday back home and do this,”



Tamara says. “I don’t have to physically be in the office at all. So it was actually great. When Covid hit, and work from home suddenly became the new norm, I didn’t have to do anything for the company to be ready. I actually got stuck in Europe for five months and I was still able to do my job.”

“I think what other businesses have been scrambling to do in the last year we had already done, when we picked DEAR.”

The right partner means your IMS works smoothly

The reason Profood’s inventory management works so smoothly today, Tamara says, is because of the excellent set-up and ongoing maintenance work provided by their DEAR implementation partner, Cornerstone Management Group.

While it’s perfectly possible to implement DEAR in your own business without outside help, having a partner on board who’s already experienced in the software can make all the difference for someone either trying a cloud-based IMS for the first time or switching from one they know well. With a partner helping pilot the system, once the business is confident in what DEAR can do, it’s smooth sailing.

“We paid Cornerstone because I had no experience with DEAR at the time,” Tamara says. “I did not feel confident to do that.”

She adds that another benefit of having Cornerstone’s help with the migration process was that it took far less time than it would to implement it on her own.

“ You don’t want the process to take too long,” Tamara says. “I think having a sturdy setup is crucial, and that’s what Cornerstone came in. I feel like if you’re going to start using it but you don’t quite know what you’re doing, it may end up backfiring down the road. ”

Tamara recommends starting from scratch, properly, with someone who’s experienced — “not only at migrating whatever you have if you’ve already been running on another platform, but also just setting it up around your business type and needs.”

Migrating from TradeGecko? Act quickly for a smoother move

With the news that Intuit is sunsetting the standalone QuickBooks Commerce / TradeGecko product, both Tamara and Adrian say that the time to make the switch to a new IMS is now.

“Migrate over from TradeGecko over to DEAR? It’s literally a no brainer. I hope you do it,” Adrian says. “For most small businesses, including training, you’re talking at most three weeks, usually done in two weeks if setup data is clean.”

He says the process of switching over can be completed very quickly and painlessly, but the important thing is to get the process started as quickly as possible, to allow for multiple users to learn the system, avoid the crunch around major sales events, and be ready for unexpected shocks.

“You want to get migrated way before massive sales events, like Black Friday, or Single’s Day

over in Hong Kong. I know the software works, because I’ve done eight years with it, and it’s been fairly bulletproof,” Adrian says. “But where it can come undone is when users aren’t used to the workflow, so they need time to onboard properly. I’d suggest a lead time of at least two months before your next big event for user training.”

“ Migrate over from TradeGecko over to DEAR? It’s literally a no brainer. I hope you do it ” - Adrian Lai, Managing Director, Cornerstone Management Group

With the sunset date of June 2022 rapidly approaching, both Tamara and Adrian recommend migrating to DEAR Systems as soon as possible, to minimize stress and to avoid the rush.

“I’d love to help anybody who is on TradeGecko to migrate over,” Adrian says. “There’s no way around it. You need your inventory management done. So it’s just a case of migrating as quickly as possible. Don’t dawdle.”

Tamara agrees, and says that long-time TradeGecko users worried about making the

switch from QuickBooks Commerce to DEAR can set their mind at ease.

“The more I used DEAR Systems, the more impressed I was with it. It even had features that I didn’t know I needed. DEAR really over-delivered!” Tamara says.

If you’re thinking about switching from TradeGecko or another IMS - or you’re simply wanting a single source of inventory truth that scales with you - then it’s time to make the move to DEAR Systems. Connect to world-leading business tools like Xero and Shopify, and enjoy the operational abilities as enterprise software that costs so much more. DEAR is a robust, time-tested cloud ERP solution that connects all your sales channels, helps you scale your operations, and lets you more effectively manage your entire supply chain, from manufacturing through to shipping.

It’s time to find out how DEAR can make a difference for your business. Start your free, 14 day trial now, and find out why thousands of other businesses have switched to DEAR and haven’t looked back.





Is Manually Managing Your Inventory And Fulfillment Preventing Growth?

Leverage the power of multi-module DEAR Inventory Management software to take your business to the next level. We keep the moving parts of your business all in one location, while automating time-consuming tasks, whether you are in retail, wholesale, or manufacturing.

Visit www.dearsystems.com to begin a 14-day Free Trial.