# Custom Development Case Study

How Custom Shopify Theme Development Can Secure Long Term Growth

Residents in and around Peninsula, Ohio, can turn to one of the finest vendors in the industry, not to mention the local market, for outfitting their homes with fine designs. Ohio Hardwood Furniture, located in Peninsula, is a retailer of some of the highest-end, ultra-premium benchmade furniture in the United States. Their catalog is full of seating arrangements and other furniture from elite, timeless names like Copeland, Thayer Coggin, Wesley Hall, Leathercraft, and many others. They are a shop on which their customers can rely for quality and fine designs.

But Ohio Hardwood Furniture does not only sell the works of other craftsmen. Their founder, Pascal King-Smith, brings a lifetime of woodworking and furniture making experience to the business, and the company is as noteworthy for the designs it produces in-house as for the designs of others.

For Ohio Hardwood, eCommerce, understandably, is not necessarily a focus. The shopping experience for furniture tends to be done in-person so that shoppers can see, feel, size up, and actually interact with their designs. Shopping for furniture is not like shopping for other consumer goods; it is done rarely, with purpose, and often conducted on a very personal level.

Still, the executives at Ohio Hardwood Furniture recognized that there were opportunities to be had in the online marketplace, and knew that they could compete more effectively with an established online presence. They started their search looking to improve their customer's online shopping experiences, spread brand awareness, and generate leads to their business, even if those shoppers would ultimately visit them in-store instead of ordering online. That's when they found us, 1Digital® Agency.
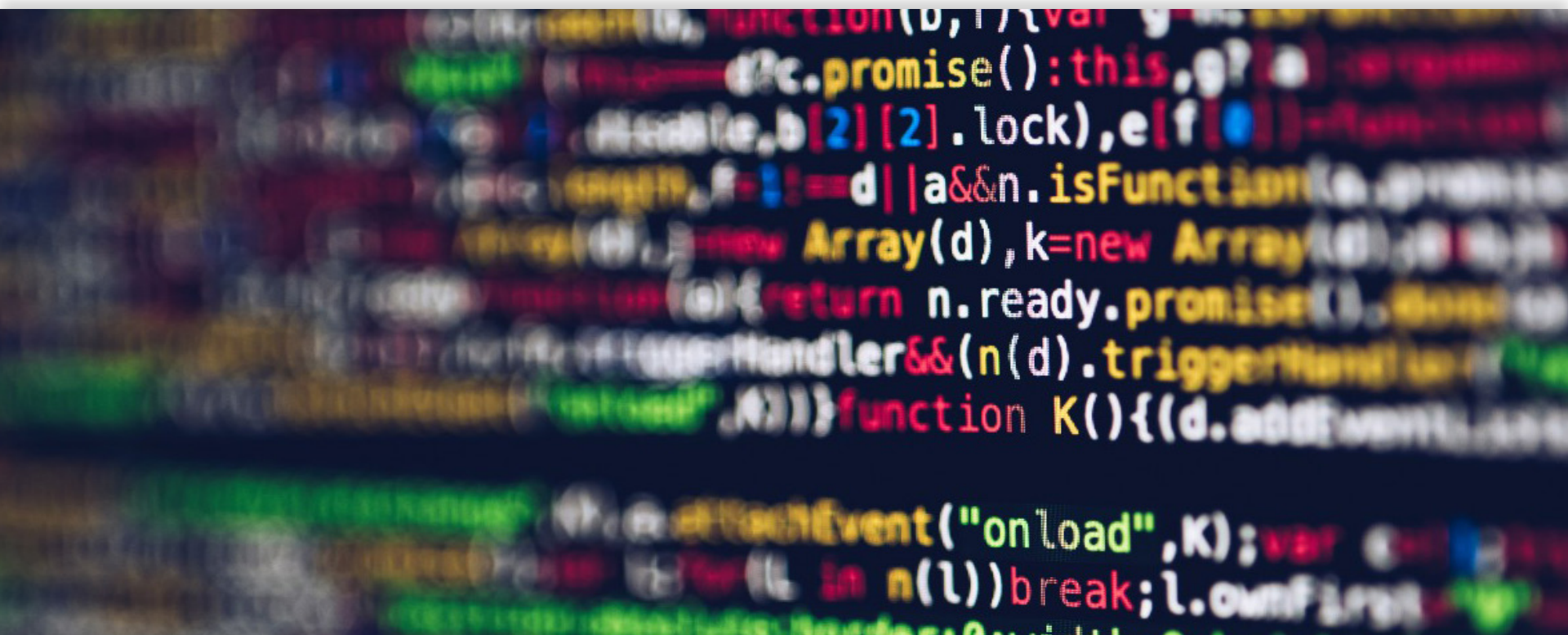
Custom Design for Lead Generation, Brand Exposure, and User Experience

Buying furniture online is a tough and difficult process, and even though Ohio Hardwood came to 1Digital® with a pre-existing Shopify store, they had never actually closed a sale through that store, even for a ready-to-ship floor item. What they needed was to improve the user interface in order to provide a better user experience, even if it meant simply pushing more visitors to their showroom in Ohio as a lead generation tool.

So they sought out a full service Shopify agency to redesign their Shopify website to promote a better shopping experience that was more visually striking and brand-integrated. Before the redesign, their online storefront was bare bones and contained little information about their business – it was really only used as an effort to push customers to their actual brick and mortar store.
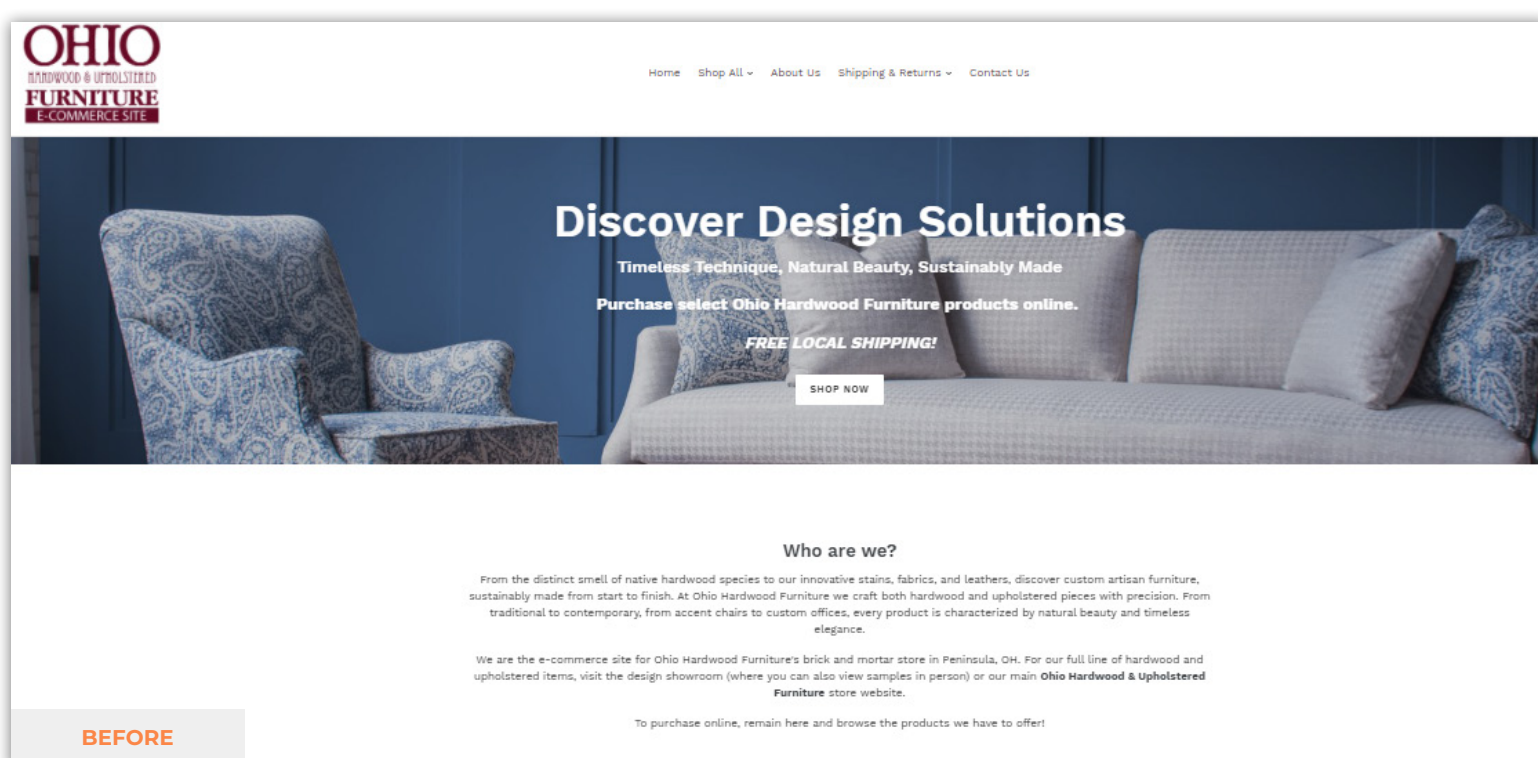
This is justifiable, however, since the premise of their store is furniture sales, and most furniture sales require a thorough and highly personalized shopping process and experience. Furniture, like cars and clothing, is something that shoppers like to interact with before buying, and so previously almost none of the company's sales came through their online store.

Despite the fact that they still fully expected most of their sales to go through their physical location, they also recognized that eCommerce operations would become increasingly important in the future and that to scale growth, they needed to offer online options for sales and customizations in order to reach a wider audience. The people living in Ohio aren't the only ones with furniture in their homes, after all.

The new Shopify store we built for them, OHFInteriors.com, features bold, bright, original product imagery, was visually appealing, and placed a high emphasis on the allure of their furniture. It also features a sticky menu (a preview of which you can see below) that follows the user down the homepage and across any other pages visited. This sticky menu allows visitors to shop through a huge selection of

furniture items, some of which are ready-to-ship floor items and others that require a custom order and a high degree of input from the customer. This latter area of design and development is where Ohio Hardwood Furniture's work with our Shopify experts has really paid off for them and will continue to do so in the long run.

Still, the majority of the design project, which was completed in February 2020, did not focus on eCommerce. The basic idea was to improve the online user experience with the intent to drive traffic to their physical store. That was still how the majority of their sales were conducted, while the website was seen as a lifeline and a lead generation tool. There were new and better options for closing sales of floor items on their newly designed website, but sales were slow online and better in-store.

Soon, however, they would realize just how lucky they were to have that redesigned Shopify store, and with a little help of a Shopify developer like 1Digital® Agency, they'd have an agile solution to help them avert the challenges on the horizon.

## How eCommerce Adds More to a Brick and Mortar Business

The redesigned store was intended to drive traffic to their physical storefront. This was acceptable to the owners since that was the purpose of the website, to begin with. The website was bringing in a little bit of revenue from ready-to-ship floor items, but the problem with the premise of that

was that most of Ohio Hardwood Furniture's value comes from the customized designs they create for their customers. While customers were buying a modicum of ready-to-ship items, they weren't capitalizing on Ohio Hardwood Furniture's bread-and-butter, at least not online.

What happened next was something that could not have been predicted.

In March 2020, when businesses across the country were being forced to shutter their doors to customers, Ohio Hardwood Furniture, like many other businesses, was forced into a very difficult situation. Store owners across the country were being hit with lower patronage even where they were not being mandated to shut down, and Ohio Hardwood Furniture was in the same boat. Traffic to their physical store dropped off, and they looked to eCommerce as a lifeline. They needed a solution that would enable customers to place custom orders for the furniture that Ohio Hardwood produced in-house. Without the in-person traffic to sustain the store, they turned to 1Digital® Agency, their Shopify Partner of choice, for relief.

Working together with the team at OHF, we determined that what Ohio Hardwood needed was a solution that would mimic the in-person shopping experience closely enough to draw custom orders from the website. Since Ohio Hardwood Furniture specializes in the production of custom, built-to-order furniture, they needed a way to entice these types of orders online.
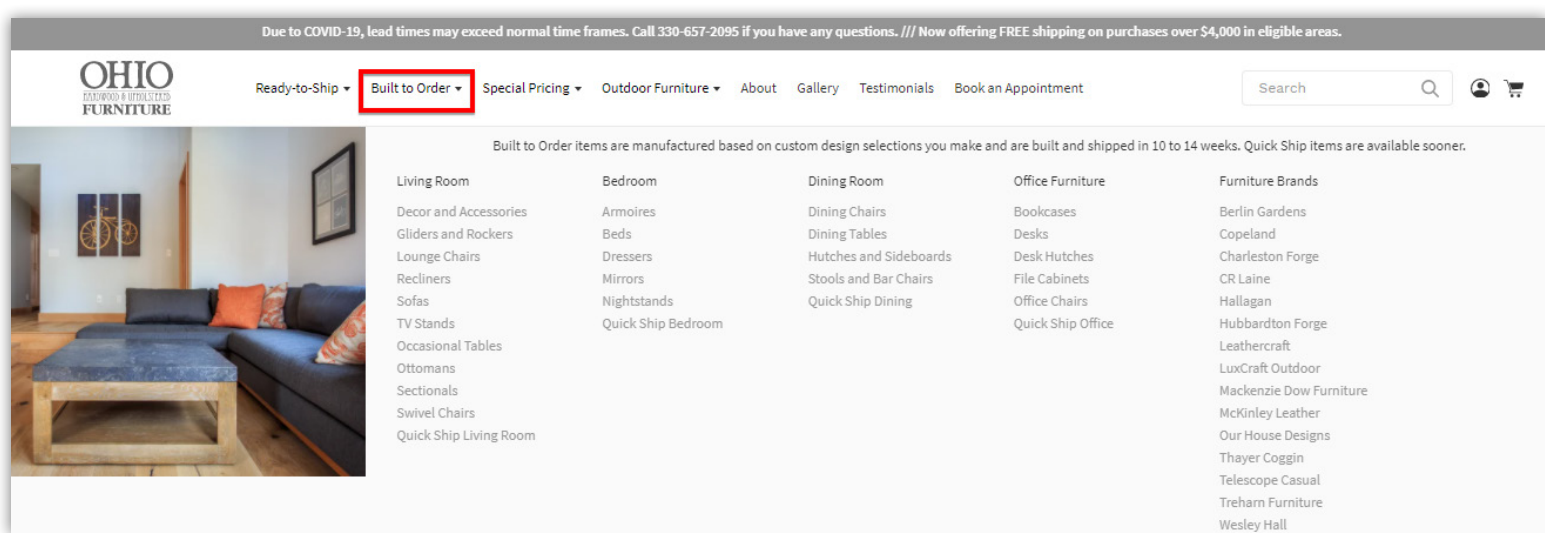
While customers could previously visit their location in Peninsula, Ohio, to see examples of their furniture in their showroom and place custom orders, what they needed now was to create a simple and intuitive process for doing the same thing online. It would have to clearly state and display the options that customers could choose, and it had to be a pain-free experience, otherwise, customers would not go through with it.

What we created was a custom app (in the form of a new product page template) for their Shopify store that was easy, simple to use, and could be quickly navigated. All the while it categorizes and displays a large amount of information, succinctly and in a straightforward fashion.

Ohio Hardwood Furniture sells an assortment of different types of furniture for many areas of the home, from the bedroom to the office to the dining room and everywhere in between. To illustrate the value of the app we created, we'll investigate a hypothetical scenario.

Hypothetical Scenario

Let's say a customer visits OHFInteriors.com because their actual store is inaccessible. If the customer in question intends to buy a dining room table (or a dining set with chairs) he or she could easily navigate through to the collections we arranged for them via the sticky menu that we created when we initially designed their website.

Once the customer sees a table that strikes their fancy, that's where the real value of our app comes into play. Let's say a customer is enticed by the Bayfield Table which you can see listed on the product page in the image below.
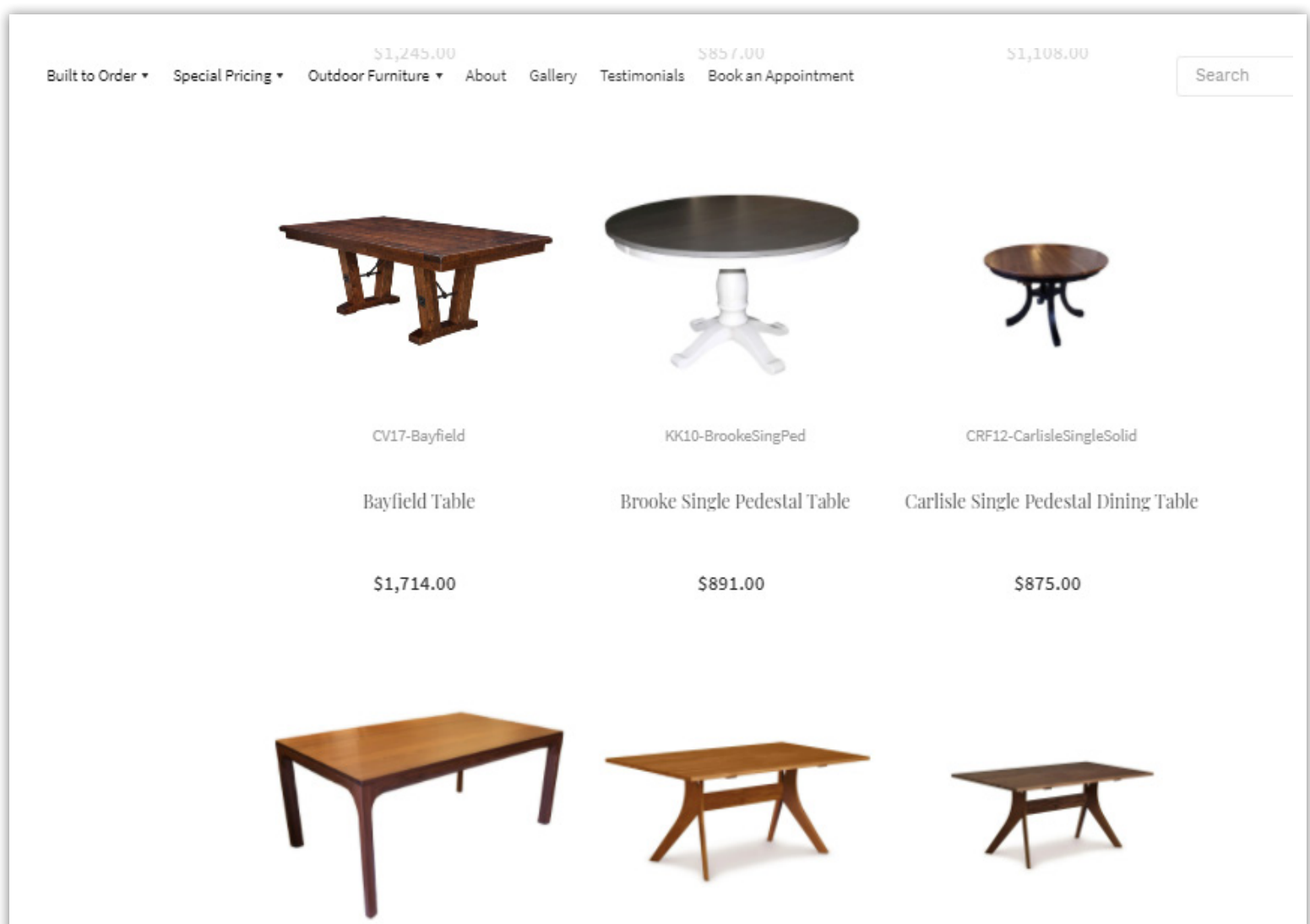
That is well and good, but the thing to keep in mind here is that Ohio Hardwood makes these tables to order, from the wood of the customer's choice, in the size and configuration of the customer's choice, and finished according to their wishes. As you can see from the images below, the customer is prompted to select product options.
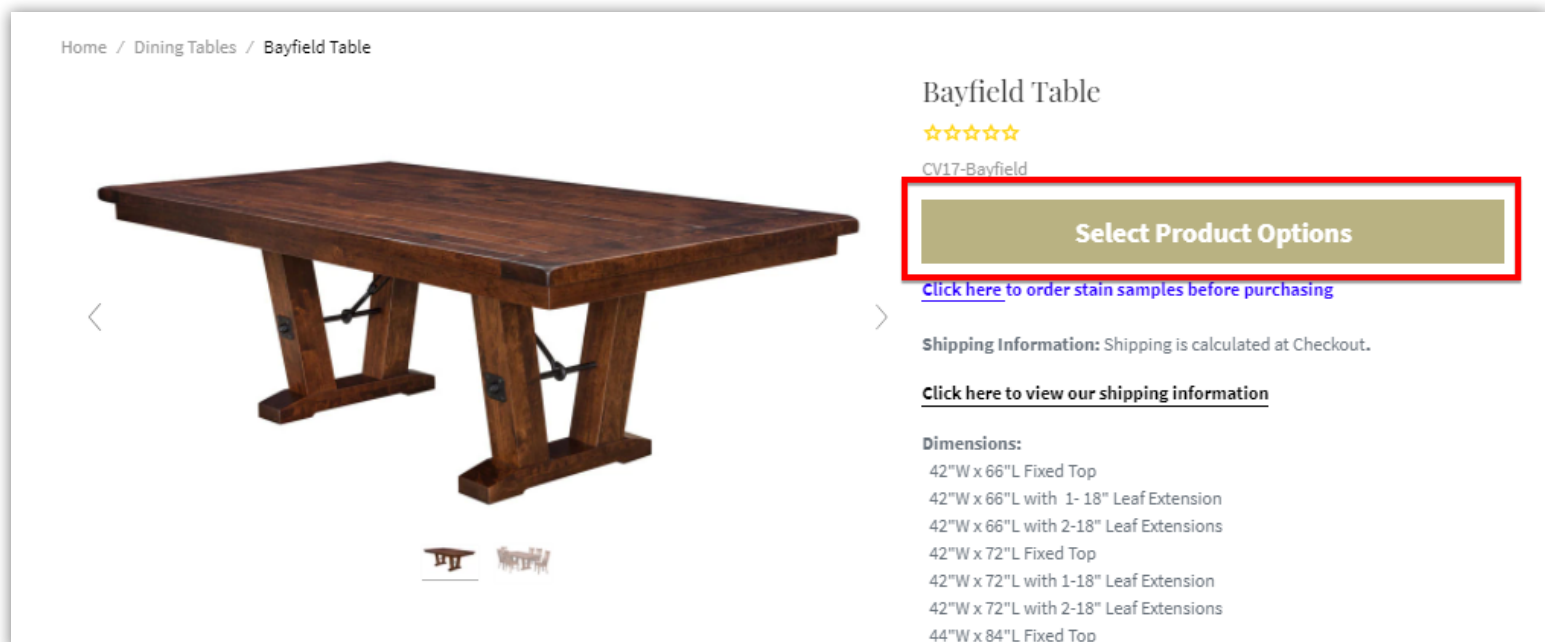
When this is selected, it sends the customer to a display showing sizes. Once a size and configuration is selected, as shown below, the customer will be prompted to select the type of wood from which he or should would like the table made
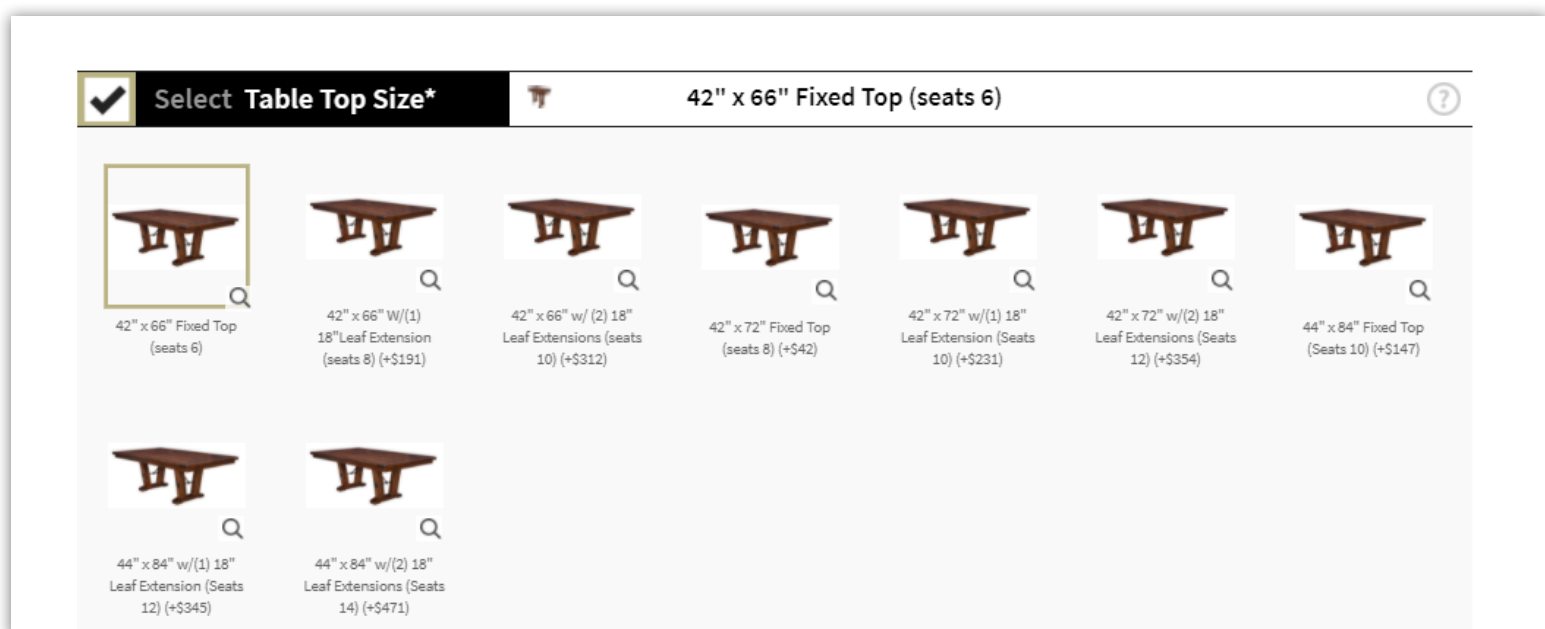
As detailed below, the customer will have a choice of several hardwoods, including but not limited to Red Oak, Quartersawn White Oak, Cherry, Walnut and others.
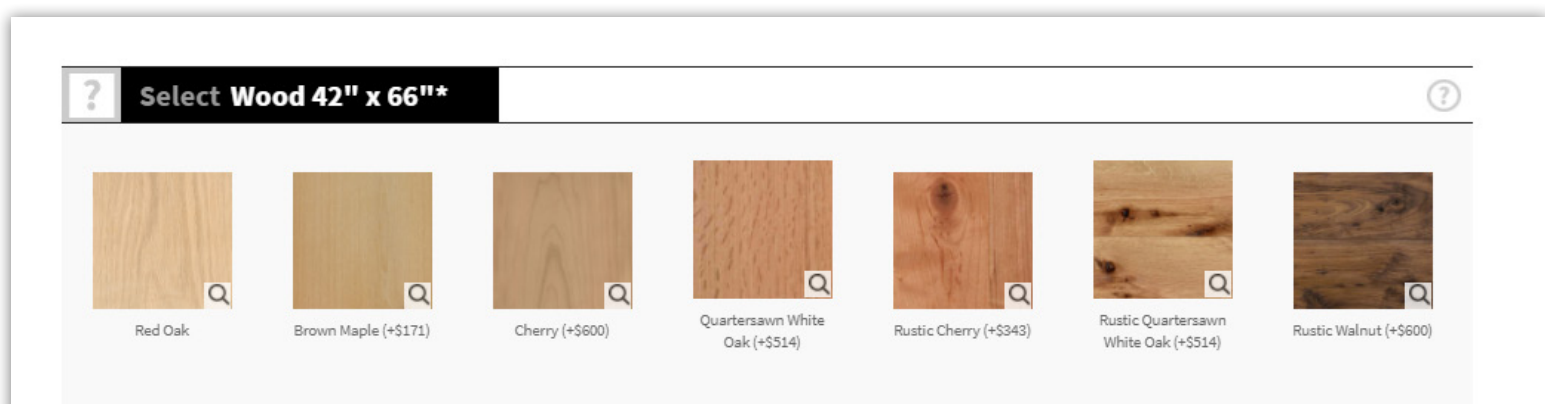
In this fashion, we were able to as closely simulate the in-person shopping experience as possible, while giving Ohio Hardwood Furniture the ability to include pictures of stains and finishes with the app (featured at the top of the product page, beneath "Select Product Options") in order to boost conversion rates through a better, more thoughtfully crafted user interface.

Only two weeks after we created and delivered this Shopify app for their online store, they reached out to us with some great news – after months of sluggish online sales of nothing more than floor items, a customer had completed Ohio Hardwood Furniture's first-ever custom online order – a dining room table and chairs, all completed through our custom product page template that offered the experience detailed above.

This represents a significant victory for our client, Ohio Hardwood Furniture, and displays how an adaptive approach to agile eCommerce solutions can spell out the difference between success and tribulation. Many businesses around the country are and have been struggling due to the economic impact of government-mandated shutdowns, and Ohio Hardwood Furniture is one of them. However, their entrepreneurial spirit, and our innovative thinking, has delivered a solution that will help them grow in the future. Now they have nothing to look forward to but more sales and more custom orders, whether online or in their store.

No one could have foreseen the closures around the country that have been enacted due to COVID-19, but thoughtful, considerate eCommerce entrepreneurs could see that eCommerce is a viable outlet for sales and growth even when in-person sales are not practical or possible. The Shopify platform is a powerful, capable eCommerce platform, and when vested with the custom functionality that our web designers and developers can give to it, it is an adaptable tool that has come to the rescue of online businesses like Ohio Hardwood Furniture.

What we've done for Ohio Hardwood is provide a happy ending in the face of an otherwise grim reality, and we can do the same for your online business, as is evident from our collection of eCommerce case studies. There's no time like the present to craft an adaptable eCommerce solution or have a custom app developed that improves your customers' online shopping experience, and if all you need is a little help to get moving, we're only a call away.

Whether you're just looking for Shopify theme development or you're in need of more advanced custom development from a capable, experienced, digital agency, call us today. Let us know what your business is facing and we'll help you prepare or respond. It all starts with a call or a message, so reach out to us at info@1digitalagency.com or by phone at 888-982-8269.

More 1Digital® Development Case Studies

Considering our Custom Development Services?

Using Expertise to Maximize Conversion Rate

If you're site needs to be leaner, cleaner, and all around better at taking a visitor and turning them into a customer, you should rely on an expert. We've built hundreds of eCommerce sites. Our experience in this industry has built our sixth sense for what works best. When you partner with an eCommerce Agency like 1Digital your site benefits from those decades of combined experience.

Reach out to our team for a site audit that can help you identify what about your site is working and what could be improved. Our team of great designers, developers and marketers can go over your online presence with a fine-toothed comb. When it comes to something as delicate, complex and important as your site's conversion rate, it helps to have a ringer in your corner.

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