

MISSION POSSIBLE

with **ZOHOCreator**

The journey of a bike manufacturer towards workflow automation and digital documentation, with a little help from Zoho Creator.



Custom



Gifts & Gear



Rentals

MISSION
BICYCLE COMPANY

INDEX

Prologue - Mission Bicycle Company	01
The store-bought DIY bike shop	02
A wrench in the works	03
The ace in the hole	04
An express solution that clicked	08



MISSION

BICYCLE COMPANY

PROLOGUE

In 2008, denizens of the Mission district of San Francisco received a refreshing alternative to commuting on foot. The folks at Mission Bicycle Company envisioned a future where people not only fell in love with cycling, but also with their bicycles; and they made this happen by offering to build fully customized bikes for each customer. Soon, Valencia Street's traffic consisted of more people on wheels than off them.

THE STORE-BOUGHT DIY BIKE SHOP

The company has an interesting business model. To start with, customers are shown a range of parts to choose from—frames, handlebars, rims, gearing systems, you name it. Once they've decided on parts, the sales rep makes a record of it on what the staff call a 'build sheet', which is essentially a detailed directive for the builders to assemble the bike. Since customers select parts from an open-ended catalogue, the resulting bikes, at least on paper, can consist of an infinite number of possible configurations.





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We started by wanting an electronic version of what we called our build sheet. A way that we could prevent errors from being made.

Ryan Moskal, Operations Manager

A WRENCH IN THE WORKS

Since assembly doesn't start until after the customer has left the outlet, an impasse is reached when a certain part they've selected doesn't fit with another, eventually resulting in a cancellation or redesign. For customers, this meant another visit to the store, leading to general dissatisfaction. Such occurrences wasted money, time, and energy on both sides of the transaction. This issue, coupled with concerns about data organization and retrieval, prompted Operations Manager—Ryan Moskal, to look for an alternative to paper-based data management and archiving.

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Our Zoho Creator app is centred around an ordered database that captures information about each bicycle built.

Ryan Moskal, Operations Manager

THE ACE IN THE HOLE

Ryan stumbled upon Zoho Creator, and set about digitizing the store's day-to-day operations.

He had two primary objectives in mind:

- To simplify order-taking and order management
- To streamline data handling across the entire value chain—from billing to after-sales service.



To that end, he built an app with a handful of modules to organize information, simplify data entry, and automate recurring tasks, among other things.

Sales Management

This section of the app contains two parts: the front end, also called the sales interface, and the back end, aptly named the production interface.

Sales Interface

The front end of the app acts as a Point-of-Sale system (POS), allowing a sales rep to record details about the customer and their bike part preferences. It features a simple, easy-to-understand UI, and only displays parts that are compatible with each other on the order-taking form. Ryan also took the time to add a nifty little feature that automatically displays the ETA of an order when it is placed, along with the purchase receipt.

Production Interface

Here, the customer-friendly order summary recorded using the sales interface appears in more technical terms, showing part specifications and dimensions. When printed, this report functions as the build sheet, fulfilling Mission Bicycle's primary objective in using Zoho Creator.

Vendor Management

The company prides itself on the fact that its bikes are built using the highest quality components available. Their parts are sourced from several locations around the world, and organizing purchase and logistics was of paramount importance. With the app built on Zoho Creator, staff were able to automate ordering, with an electronic Bill of Materials (BOM) emailed to their suppliers every week.

Accounting

With sales handled, Ryan got busy configuring a bookkeeping module for the app. Essentially, the module aggregated the costs associated with parts, assembly, and profit margins and summed them for each bike.

While it initially provided weekly figures for revenue, its functionality was extrapolated to calculate monthly and annual cash flow, as well. While fundamentally simple in operation, it saved the team a quantifiable margin of time and energy.

CRM and After-sales Service

It's said that retaining customers is more a function of attending to them after they've left the store than when they're in it. Keeping in line with the adage, Ryan configured a handful of automated emails to reach customers after they'd purchased a bike:

- A recognition of the purchase, thanking the customer and providing them with tips on bike maintenance.
- A survey regarding their experience with the bike, sent exactly two weeks from the date of delivery.
- A reminder to take advantage of their first complimentary service, sent to local customers two months after delivery.

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The modules we've created in Zoho Creator all work together to give us the complete business data that we need.

Ryan Moskal, Operations Manager

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The first time I used Zoho Creator I was really surprised at how user friendly it was and how Ryan could design it to work well with our business needs.

Dan Cherry, Production Manager

Inventory Monitoring

In addition to pedal-powered machines, the Mission Bicycle Company also deals in accessories, ranging from wittily captioned tees to ingenious phone mounts that clip to a handlebar. To monitor these stock levels, barcode-printed cards were placed close to the bottom of item stacks. When stock is close to being exhausted, shop staff scan the barcode, which triggers an email to be sent to the vendor, asking them to ship a fresh consignment to the store.

Bike Registration Services

In an effort to curb theft, Mission Bicycle partnered with bikeindex.org, a national registration service that indexes the sales details of every bike. It makes it more difficult to sell stolen bikes and easier to track them. By integrating the app with the website, details about every bike sold are now automatically updated in bikeindex.org's database—a move that reassured customers about their bikes' safety.



AN EXPRESS SOLUTION THAT CLICKED

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I now feel like we have the tools to address any problem we come up against. Our only limit is our imagination.

Ryan Moskal, Operations Manager

The team didn't have to wait to start seeing results. Within months of adopting Zoho Creator as their de-facto ERP, their customers were immensely happier—courtesy of the firm's faster throughput, absence of technical error, and consistent follow-up. On the other side, staff were able to devote more time to their assigned jobs, rather than having to sweat the small stuff. It was a decisive win-win for Mission Bicycle Company!



Increased productivity:

Leaving trivialities to the software allowed staff to focus on what they do best: putting together the best bikes in town. An astounding 500% boost in net productivity was recorded within weeks of using Zoho Creator.



Non-existent error margin:

Digitizing the value chain using Zoho Creator reduced assembly-related errors to a grand total of zero.



Efficient time management:

A substantial boost in working efficiency was noted, with 45% total work hours saved per week. Going by the standard of a 9-hour shift, that's more than 20 hours saved every week.



Diminished cash outflow:

A reduction in paper purchase and storage, part mismatches, and cancelled orders resulted in a marked improvement in spending efficiency.

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As I built more and more with Zoho Creator I realized there are endless possibilities for what we can do with it. One word I could use to describe the experience is ‘empowering’.

Ryan Moskal, Operations Manager

ABOUT US

At Zoho Creator, we've always worked towards a single purpose - enabling the citizen developer to build functional apps without having to learn to code. And with cutting-edge features like workflow automation, low-code development, and native mobile access, we're making it possible, one app at a time.

GREAT BRANDS THAT TRUST US:



CONTACT INFORMATION

We'd love to talk! Reach out to us:

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