



SHARKMARX Partners with ProcurePort to Create Successful Online Marketplace for Landscape Products

ProcurePort's SaaS reverse auction solution provided both customization and affordability

“The biggest benefit of working with ProcurePort was their ability to truly listen to our ideas and our unique needs. They did a lot of research and customization to ensure the solution worked for us, instead of trying to fit our business model into one-size-fits all software.”

– George Beiter,
Co-Founder of SHARKMARX

Organization Information

- Links buyers and sellers of landscape products through a unique reverse auction eMarketplace
- Founded in early 2013
- Allows landscape product buyers to obtain the lowest possible prices
- Allows sellers of landscape products to gain access to new markets and sales channels

Solution

- ProcurePort Cloud-Hosted Reverse Auction Software
- ProcurePort software customization and consulting services

Business Benefits Realized

- Enabled SHARKMARX founders to realize their vision of a reverse auction eMarketplace for landscape products.
- Combined the affordability of out-of-the-box software with the customization of an enterprise solution.
- Gained positive feedback from site users, who praise the ProcurePort technology for its ease of use.
- Supported the successful launch and subsequent growth of SHARKMARX, allowing the company to hit all its first-year milestones.



“What really drew us to ProcurePort was the fact that they took the time to understand our business needs. A lot of other providers pushed their solution and wanted us to conform to that software, but the team at ProcurePort really worked to listen and understand what we needed.”

– Dan Degan,
Co-Founder of SHARKMARX

In an age when technology plays a key role in nearly every industry, the landscaping industry has been one of the last holdouts. According to industry veteran George Beiter, one of the reasons for the resistance is the nature of the products themselves. “The belief has been that you can’t sell hardscaping products online because they are too heavy and difficult to transport,” says Beiter. “The challenge of getting these products through a local distribution network to a job site in someone’s backyard has caused the industry to hang on to archaic purchasing practices.”

Together with business partner Dan Degan, Beiter saw a way to finally modernize the landscape industry purchasing process. The duo envisioned an eMarketplace based on a reverse auction model in which a buyer would specify material and delivery requirements, and then allow sellers to bid against each other in a confidential auction process. With this system, both buyers and sellers would benefit: buyers would get the lowest possible price for the products they needed and sellers would gain access to new markets and sales channels.

Once the business plan was created, the two co-founders named the company SHARKMARX and began the search for a technology partner that could make their vision for a new way to do business in the landscape industry a reality.

Customization without Complexity

As the SHARKMARX founders interviewed potential technology partners; their main challenge was finding a partner who could provide the right balance of customization and simplicity. “We needed a lot of customization to create the process we envisioned - off-the-shelf software wasn’t going to work,” says Beiter. “On the other hand, the enterprise solutions we looked at were way too complicated for our target user. We wanted a simple interface that was customized to fit our business needs.”

At the same time, they saw the benefits of a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model. “Our end user wouldn’t want to worry about downloading and maintaining another piece of software, nor did we want to worry about providing the infrastructure and support required for an enterprise solution,” says Beiter.

Ultimately, they found everything they were searching for in ProcurePort, a leader in cloud-hosted e-procurement and sourcing services known for its reverse auction and eMarketplace expertise.



Bringing a Vision to Life

Throughout the three-month development process, the SHARKMARX founders worked closely with the ProcurePort team to ensure their eMarketplace provided an optimal user experience. This included a number of customizations, such as a unique payment system. “We needed to give sellers the confidence that the buyers could pay for the purchases, but also give buyers the peace of mind that they would be protected in case of a problem with the shipment,” says Beiter. To solve this challenge, ProcurePort created a credit card hold system that allows the buyer to release the funds only after the products are received.

SHARKMARX 14 Week 5 Step Engagement Process



Once development was complete in January 2013, SHARKMARX successfully launched their business. “We’ve been thrilled with the results we have achieved so far,” says Beiter. “Our sellers are now shipping to wider markets and bidding on jobs they never had access to previously, while our buyers have been amazed by the simplicity of the reverse auction process and impressed with how much they’re saving.”

According to Beiter, partnering with ProcurePort was instrumental in successfully bringing the SHARKMARX vision to life.

“I would absolutely recommend ProcurePort to other businesses and startups. It’s critical to have a partner who understands that every solution is unique and has the depth of technical expertise and experience needed to build that solution.”

– George Beiter,
Co-Founder of SHARKMARX