

# Avalara Customer Success Story

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Bruno Oghittu, Head of E-Commerce, Christian Louboutin



Since 1992, Christian Louboutin has been blazing a trail in the fashion industry with their high-end shoe and handbag lines. In fact, their signature red-soled shoes have become a staple on Hollywood red carpets and amongst the rich and famous. So it is no wonder that demand for their high-fashion products has increased dramatically year after year.

## U.S. Sales Tax Laws Have Louboutin Seeing Red

Even though Louboutin has 40 stores worldwide, popularity of their shoes and handbags quickly grew beyond brick and mortar locations. Selling their products online proved to be a tremendous growth opportunity for Louboutin. But as they set their sights on the U.S., sales tax complexity had Louboutin's Head of E-Commerce, Bruno Oghittu, seeing Red.

“Unlike Europe, where there is a single tax rate for just about everything, U.S. sales tax rates vary from state to state, county to county, and city by city,” says Bruno. “It’s a complicated situation that’s impossible to manage manually.” Before their online store could open for business in the U.S., Bruno knew that an automated sales tax management solution was a necessity.

## A Step In the Right Direction

Having been through a similar experience with a previous company, Bruno already knew that not all sales tax solutions are created equal. He says, “The sales tax software I used in the past was extremely slow and unreliable.” This time around, Bruno says, “We needed a real-time application that was fast and accurate because our customers want a final price before check out. If they have to wait too long for the sales tax calculation (and shipping), they’ll leave the website and we could lose the sale.”

Bruno says it was also important to find a sales tax application that was integrated with Magento - their online shopping cart software and e-commerce platform. Bruno turned to Magento for a recommendation and that’s where he discovered AvaTax by Avalara. “Magento has great products and fantastic service so I put a lot of trust in any solution that they recommend.”

## A Perfect Fit

With an existing integration to Magento that automatically calculates taxes on transactions in real time, AvaTax proved to be a perfect fit for Louboutin. “Implementation was about as simple as flipping a switch,” says Bruno. “All we had to do was set up some tax codes and AvaTax took care of the rest.”

And when Bruno had questions about U.S. sales tax laws and setting up codes in AvaTax? “I just called Avalara. They were extremely helpful and the support I received was fantastic. The whole experience was just a breeze.”

## Sales Tax Management is In the Bag

Avalara runs seamlessly in the background, automatically pulling sales tax data into each online transaction. Bruno says, “It’s fast, it’s accurate, and it just works. In fact, we don’t even think about it until the end of each month when we run our sales tax reports.” In addition, AvaTax automatically validates and corrects the address — including zip code +4 — when necessary.

When it comes to accuracy, AvaTax really shines. In an environment where a single zip code can have multiple tax rates, Avalara’s unique geospatial technology comes in handy, calculating sales tax with “rooftop accuracy,” helping Louboutin reduce their audit risk.

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 Avalara



## Focus on Fashion with AvaTax Pro

Because Avatax is a cloud-based, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution, the sales tax rate database is automatically updated to reflect all-too-frequent changes in U.S. tax law. Louboutin doesn't have to worry about a thing.

What's more, Louboutin relies on the Pro version of AvaTax to handle unique taxation laws in the apparel industry where special rules for high end shoes and frequent "tax holidays" make things even more complex. Bruno says, "It's all handled automatically in AvaTax, which saves us a tremendous amount of time and effort researching and manually managing special, industry-specific rules."

## Putting Their Best Foot Forward

In 2011, Louboutin expanded their online presence into Canada by simply activating Canadian tax codes in Avatax. "We didn't have anything complicated or special to install when it came time to expand," says Bruno. "Setting up Avatax for Canadian transactions was as simple as turning on nexus for that region."

AvaTax by Avalara has allowed Louboutin to grow and expand internationally without any worries or taxation fears. Today, women throughout the world can go online and buy their own red-soled flash of Hollywood glamour. Bruno praises AvaTax saying, "It's a fantastic product, I get outstanding support, and it's extremely affordable. I couldn't be happier."



## Christian Louboutin

### Product

AvaTax Calc

### Applications

Magento e-commerce store

### Website

[us.christianlouboutin.com](http://us.christianlouboutin.com)

## About Avalara

Based on Bainbridge Island, Washington, Avalara is transforming the sales and use tax compliance process for businesses of all sizes. With point-and-click ease, Avalara provides the fastest, easiest, most accurate and affordable way for companies to address their sales and use tax compliance. Avalara is the industry's most trusted provider of solutions, serving thousands of registered users located throughout the U.S., Canada and abroad, delivering more than 350 million sales tax transactions, and filing and remitting more than \$10 billion in tax collections per year.

Learn more about AvaTax today.

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