

Musthave



A National Business to Business Centre Showcase

musthave



Background

Musthave, high street retailers of exclusive skincare, cosmetic and grooming products, opened their flagship store in Leamington Spa in September 2003. Their exclusive range of products quickly attracted a loyal customer base prepared to travel significant distances to their store. Initially they had a web presence but this was limited to a static website, without a catalogue or the opportunity to buy online.

Their range of products includes many of those you read about in the fashion magazines but are difficult to find on the high street. The business case for extending the reach of their store through online trading was compelling. They needed to find the right e-trading solution to develop their brand and drive sales through the Internet.

Objectives

Andy Sutcliffe and Jacquie Jackson, the founders of the company, set the business objective of building the brand and driving sales through online trading in March 2004. Andy contacted The National Business to Business Centre for e-business advice and after an initial meeting, the B2B Centre's consultants completed an Online Trading Roadmap, setting out development steps and an action plan. One of the fundamental issues for musthave was how to link the website to their existing electronic till system (EPoS system), thus maintaining the integrity of their existing stock management system. The Roadmap included a

phased solution that developed into a totally integrated system. Initial phases required website sales to be manually fed into the stock system, with full integration planned in the future. This initial phase was deemed the best option due to both time and budget constraints.

The Centre recommended that musthave complete a requirements document before selecting a website developer; this would help them clarify their vision for the site and clearly state the functionality and features required. With a developer on board the new website went live in December 2004.

e-Marketing

Andy recognised that the new website needed to be promoted in order to fully utilise it as a sales channel.

"We knew that it was not simply a case of build it and they will come, and so asked the B2B Centre to help us develop an e-marketing plan, which involved segmenting our existing customer base and profiling our market to translate the key findings into the virtual shopping environment. We could then select the right e-marketing tools to reach both existing and new customers; we opted to use Pay Per Click, Search Engine Optimisation and also decided to launch an E-Newletter" comments Andy.

Pay Per Click involved selecting keywords based on their product range. When anyone searches Google under these words the

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musthave website is featured, highlighted on the first search page in a column separate to general search terms. Using this ensures they are one of the first businesses to be shown. This is an inexpensive, highly effective way of promoting the site, as they only pay Google if the searcher clicks through to their site.

They found this to be a real turning point in driving online sales: "Once we started Pay Per Click we saw a 100% uplift on sales – approximately 5% of our click-throughs are converted into sales. The response is quick, but not immediate: in our case it was about a week before it had a significant impact" comments Andy.

The company then employed an experienced graphic designer to manage their website in-house, who took responsibility for Search Engine Optimisation, and ensured pages of the website were fully optimised by product keywords, improving their listings with the main search engines.

Launching an e-newsletter has seen website traffic increase 100% on the day of release, and return visitors have also increased by 30%. Musthave originally sent this on a monthly basis to regular buyers and website subscribers; it has proved so popular they now send it on a fortnightly basis, and include a mixture of product news and special offers, all aimed at driving further sales.

Benefits

The main benefits of musthave's e-marketing activity include:

- ★ Increased awareness of musthave
- ★ Increased new visitors to the site
- ★ Increased return visitors to the site
- ★ Increased frequency with which some customers purchase, through newsletter promotions and special offers.

Andy summarises the difference the website and e-marketing has made to the business: "When we first began trading we envisaged a large portfolio of stores supported by a trading website. However the success of the internet has been such that we are now considering a smaller, more strategic portfolio of stores, supported by a substantial web presence. We do not see ourselves solely as an internet business and still plan to open more retail stores. However, most of our recent focus has been in the development of our website, which has really paid off.

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The difficulty with starting a new project where previous knowledge is limited, is in setting out exactly what you want. This is where the National Business to Business Centre, with their significant experience and expertise, can really help. "We had an organic approach to the development of our requirements, which evolved over time. If we did it all again then I think there are significant benefits to detailing as many of your requirements as possible rather than have some of them evolve through the course of the project."

If you would like to talk to musthave about their experience, or find out how your business can achieve what they did, contact the National Business to Business Centre now at www.nb2bc.co.uk. To see how companies like yours have addressed their e-business issues visit the showcase area of our website at www.nb2bc.co.uk/showcases



The National Business to Business Centre

Helping growing businesses make smart e-business decisions

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