



Pictured: Steve Orriss (left)
with Craig Clarke



A vision for success

Craig Clarke was a music technology lecturer at City College Coventry for almost six years. An offer of voluntary redundancy in 2006 gave Craig the chance to do something he had planned for some time. He used the money to set up an event and multimedia production company, based on work he was already doing part-time.

Beatroot Visual Solutions was established to provide services ranging from creating and editing animated graphics for events to hiring and installing presentation equipment.

Originally, the main part of his business was in the renting and setting up of equipment and doing live video mixing at music events. But attending some business development seminars and setting up a myspace webpage, orders for animated graphics and digital video content for events for events videos started to come in.

Open Source

Craig wanted to find ways to promote the content development side of his business. He attended a presentation from the National B2B Centre about the potential of well-functioning website and search engine optimisation.

"At the time, I didn't have a website – I only had the myspace profile page. That had provided me with one major client – the University of Warwick students' union – but it was limited," Craig said.

"I got some quotes for a website design but they were extremely high – I thought I'd gone into the wrong business!

I actually had a basic understanding of html and I would be able to do the graphics side so I decided to go down the open source route.

"The National B2B Centre explained the Joomla open source content management system to me – it's a very powerful system and I liked the fact it would support video usage with the addition of plug-in modules because it meant that I could integrate examples of my work into the pages easily."

Optimisation

After setting up the website, Craig sat down with the National B2B Centre to work on search engine optimisation.

He knew that a well-optimised site was necessary because of the several services his company could offer.

"We've been working together not just to pick keywords but to analyse their success and change them if required," Craig said.

"Sometimes the words you think people will search for are completely different.

"Because of our name – Beatroot – we've had a few hits from people searching for information on the vegetable, so we've shifted the focus away from the company name and directly onto the services we can offer."

He is also transferring his enthusiasm for networking onto the internet and has signed up to business based social networking sites such as eacademy.com and joined the National B2B Centre group on LinkedIn.com. This has already led to increased hits on the website from the different sources.

Results

The internet has played a part in Craig landing an installation and maintenance contract with the JD Wetherspoon and Lloyds Bar chain, while a steady stream of new clients have come through searches.

The business has grown strongly in the past 12 months despite the economic downturn.

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Turnover is up 50 per cent and Craig has recently stopped working from home and moved to a unit on the Little Heath Industrial Estate in Coventry.

“Now the trend is moving more towards the creation of content. Businesses want original, high-quality videos and other visual content for their events, and that’s what we provide,” he said.

“I’ll continue to seek advice from the National B2B Centre. They have got their fingers on the pulse and understand the new trends in internet use.”

Steve Orriss, of the National B2B Centre, said: “Beatroot is in a competitive market and by using a considered SEO plan and putting together a good website, the business has started to see benefits.

“Craig has understood the need to manage his website properly using tools like Google Analytics. This means he will always be the first spot to problems and the first to implement new solutions.”

Further Information

Do you want to take control of your website content to update it yourself? Do you want to discover the benefits of open source tools for managing your website content?

If you would like advice using open source technologies please contact the National B2B Centre using the details below.

Take control of your website

- Open Source software is free; there are no licence fees to use this software.
- Using an Open Source content management system empowers businesses with complete control of their website content, including text and images.
- Open Source software provides many alternatives to proprietary software; as well web content management systems, software includes customer relationship management systems, web browsers, email clients, photo editing, word processing and spreadsheet creation.
- Open Source software is supported by major industry vendors, such as IBM, HP, Novell, Computer Associates, Sun Microsystems and Oracle.
- On a global scale the list of businesses and organisations using Open Source in IT is endless including NASA, Google, Amazon, PayPal, West Yorkshire Police, NHS, Allied Irish Bank and Birmingham City Council and many more besides.



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The National B2B Centre

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