

# CASE STUDY



## LAN 2 LAN low-cost website delivers 10% business increase to small family business



### THE CHALLENGE

To use the Internet to provide a traditional, family business with a simple way of showing and promoting its range of products to existing and new customers.



Henbrandt is a testament to UK entrepreneurialism. It is a thriving and successful family business set up in the early 1970s to import and sell toys into the UK and parts of Europe. Although few will have heard of the company, almost everyone will know its products. These are toys, joke and novelty items like die cast model cars, slinkys, monster paperclips, mini water pistols, cowboy and indian outfits and many more that turn up in Christmas crackers, cereal packets or in toy shops around the UK. It supplies a wide range of businesses and retails outlets such as Stationery Box and Woolworths.



Like many small businesses, the company thought the Internet might have benefits for the business, but it did not really know what these benefits would be or why it should invest. Neither did it have the expertise or a lot of money to spend on a sophisticated web presence. But one important aspect of Henbrandt's business is the ability of customers to see the 2400 different products that the company imports and sells.



The Internet had the potential to make the company's products available to existing and new customers, allowing them to view the range in their own time and give them more detailed information. But as Garry Brandt, Henbrandt's managing director, says, "Everybody was having a website and we were aware that we could raise our company profile and that our products could be seen by more people, but we didn't know what it would really bring".



"There is no doubt about it, our website has brought in new business and it's given us another channel to market. It's like having another sales person, a 24-hour one."

GARRY BRANDT, MANAGING DIRECTOR  
HENBRANDT

"For a small business like ours which doesn't have a lot of money to spend on things like the Internet, or the technical know-how, the website has certainly been money well spent and it has helped us hugely over the last 12 months."

PETER DAVEY, SALES CO-ORDINATOR  
HENBRANDT

### BENEFITS OF LAN 2 LAN'S SMALL BUSINESS WEBSITE SOLUTION

- Results in a marked increase in business and new customers
- Enables complete website design, development and implementation for less than £8000
- Provides a sales support tool that reduces the need for costly and time-consuming customer site visits
- Allows non-technical staff to update website product information in minutes



## THE SOLUTION

Develop a low-cost and easy-to-update and maintain website that is also simple for customers to use.

Henbrandt, which employs 25 people, was in contact with LAN 2 LAN, a company which provides Internet and IT services to small and medium-sized companies. With a budget of just £7000 – to cover consultancy, software, development and even website design - LAN 2 LAN was asked to put Henbrandt on the Web. From the outset the brief was to create a simple, no-nonsense website that Henbrandt and it's customers would find easy to use. LAN 2 LAN used Lotus Domino and Notes software from IBM to create the website. The Lotus development tools meant that it would be simple in design, technology structure and navigability. As well as developing the website, LAN 2 LAN also hosts it and provides technical backup.

Importantly, LAN 2 LAN also ensured that Henbrandt would need only minimal technical support once the website was up and running. The Lotus Domino and Notes software allows Henbrandt staff – even those with no technical knowledge – to update product information. With a single PC, staff can add new product information onto the website within minutes. Information on the product from the company's stock system - including a photograph – is imported into a Lotus Notes template so that the name, stock number, description and product type appear in the right place on the page with the picture and in the right product category.

## THE RESULTS

The website went live in late 2001, and as a direct result, Henbrandt has seen its business increase by as much as 10 per cent. This has come from both existing customers buying more products and new customers. The company estimates that 10 per cent of new customers now come from the website.

The advertising and promotions industry is one area where the website has helped Henbrandt generate more interest for it's products. In this industry, Henbrandt's products are used for projects such as promotional campaigns or as

small toys in cereal packets. Henbrandt was supplying some advertising and promotions agencies, but since going online it has seen a growing number of enquiries from such companies.

Brandt says, "There is no doubt about it, our website has brought in new business and it's given us another channel to market. It's like having another sales person, a 24-hour one." In the last year, the website received 25,000 website visits, a high number for a trade company like Henbrandt.

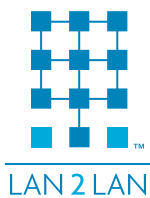
One of the most effective uses of the website has been as a selling tool for Henbrandt's sales team. They use it when dealing with customer enquires. The customer can browse it while discussing their needs over the telephone with the Henbrandt sales person. This has meant that the sales team does not have to rely on visiting the customer with a case of samples or sending out a catalogue. Sometimes it is not possible or cost effective to visit every customer.

Also, since Henbrandt's product range can change several times a week, catalogues can become outdated quickly. Using the website to view the product range reduces the sales cycle because customers can place an order immediately. In addition, it is easy to introduce customers to other products they may not have considered simply by getting them to look at other parts of the website.

Peter Davey, Henbrandt's sales co-ordinator says, "We are finding more and more customers are looking at the website and talking to us simultaneously, and that's working extremely well for us. One customer increased their order simply by looking on the website."

The next planned development for the website is to make pricing and ordering available to existing customers so they can view prices and place their own orders.

Peter Davey adds, "For a small business like ours which doesn't have a lot of money to spend on things like the Internet or the technical know-how, the website has certainly been money well spent and it has helped us hugely over the last 12 months."



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