

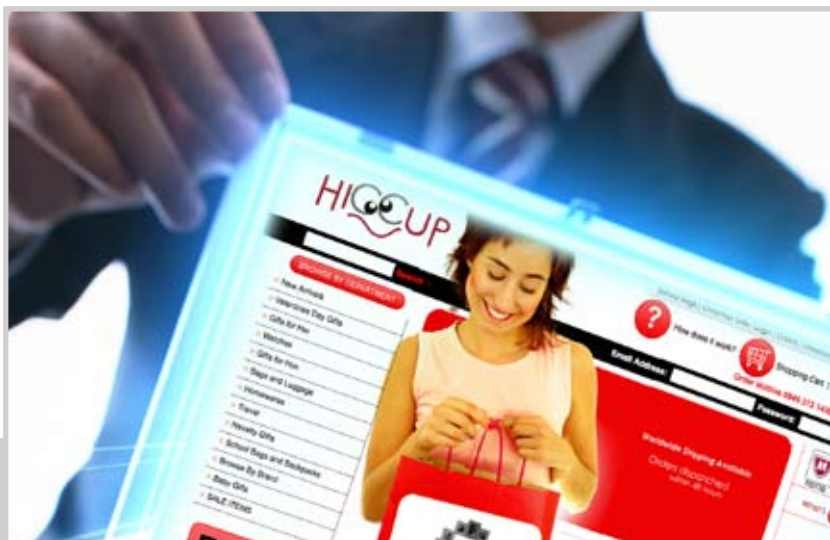


customer success story: hiccup

Hiccups changed my life

The rise of the female Internet 'Minipreneure' generation

The Client



25-year-old Danielle Heptonstall from Lancashire is part of the new generation of businesswomen in the UK. Born from the eBay generation, fuelled by determination and desire to achieve more in life, Danielle's story is an inspiration to us all.

The rise of broadband in the home and reassurance about security fears, UK shoppers splashed out a record £8.2bn in online shopping in 2005, according to a report by retail analysts Verdict. And with e-shopping within touching distance of the £9.4bn spent in UK department stores last year, analysts say retailers must take e-commerce seriously.

Danielle finished university with a degree in Advertising and Marketing in 2002 and moved to London to work in the head offices of a high street retail chain in the buying and merchandising department.

Having always had a passion for retail, this seemed like the perfect opportunity, but her dreams were not fulfilled. Within two years Danielle moved back to Manchester to work with one of the UK's largest mail order companies. During this time she built up experience of the mail-order process and established key contacts in the supplier industry.

But once more Danielle found herself disillusioned by her experiences at work. She was frustrated, not being challenged and wondering what next. "I was expecting much more from my job; I had a degree and wanted to find a job that excited me. I was not happy to settle for just anything," she said.

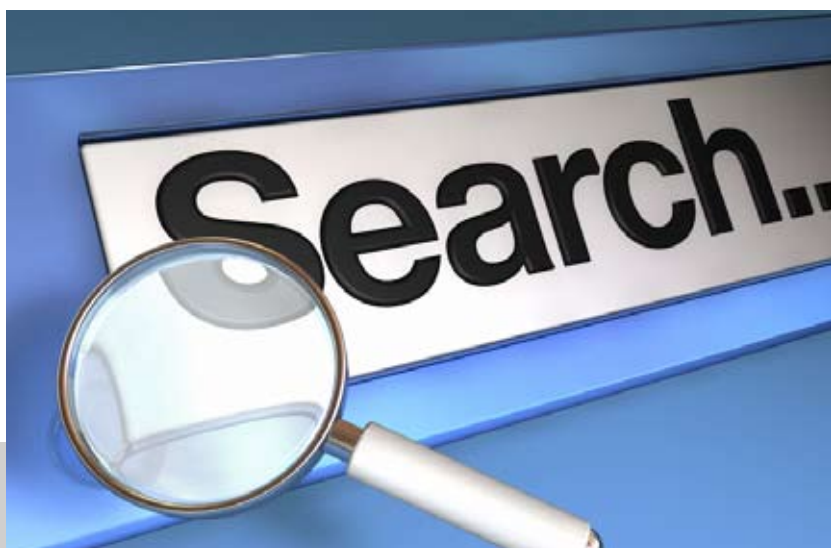
In her spare time Danielle joined the growing number of people selling items on eBay. Quickly realising the potential of this as a marketplace combined with her own skills and experience she felt she had discovered the opportunity she was looking for.

"I bought a pack of collectable cards for £20 and then posted them individually on eBay for £1 each. I made £100 profit within two weeks. This was the start of Hiccup. I continued to do this for a few weeks and realised I was starting to build a successful business, people were coming back to me again and again."

As Hiccup grew on eBay the costs associated with trading on the site grew also, Danielle found that she was paying a large amount to post items on eBay's site, which meant less profit for her.

Why Advansys?

"I had to find a company to design and build an eCommerce website that would not only look good, but was functional and could manage people paying on-line in a secure way."



"I realised I had to do this for myself, which was a thought that instantly terrified me, I had limited business skills, a big idea and some retail experience. I had to find a company to design and build an eCommerce website that would not only look good, but was functional and could manage people paying on-line in a secure way. My first port of call was to search for eCommerce website design companies in Google and Advansys (<http://www.advansys.com>) was at the top of the list."

Advansys is a specialist web design company based in Reading. The team have 8 years experience of helping small business take their business ideas on-line.

Danielle went on: "I was instantly reassured when I called Advansys, I spoke to one of the directors, Diane Forster, she really understood what I was trying to do. We spoke on a number of occasions and Diane guided me through the whole process of getting my own site set up. I had no savings at this point as I'd not been out of university long, so I put the website development cost on a credit card."

Challenge



Speaking about Danielle, Diane Forster, director, Advansys said: “She was really excited with some big plans when I first spoke to her, but she wasn’t sure how to turn it into a reality. Danielle was very impressive to work with, at Advansys we specialise in helping exactly this type of business get on-line and get profitable. I have a few principals for people to think about if they want to start an on-line business:

“at Advansys we specialise in helping exactly this type of business get on-line and get profitable”



- 1) Keep it simple to start with and adopt a phased approach. You should concentrate on incorporating the core website functionality first so you can take orders from day one. Other features can then be added later on.
- 2) Be realistic about how you’re going to attract visitors and gain orders from your website. If it’s a new business consider a managed advertising campaign (pay-per-click) to drive buying traffic to your site. In the longer term search engine optimisation should be used to increase your exposure in the natural (free) search listings.
- 3) Listen to the professional advice being offered during the project. Remember the purpose of the site is to generate orders so don’t get too emotionally attached to non-value adding details which may actually detract users from buying from the site.



Results

Speaking about her new site, www.hiccupgifts.com Danielle said: “Hiccup’s turnover has increased six-fold, I’m dispatching more than 700 units world wide per month and I have a strong and growing customer base. I’ve been amazed by what I’ve achieved in the past year. It’s changed my life. I’m so pleased I took the gamble and made the leap. I’d recommend it to anyone who thinks they might have an idea or dream in them,” she added.

“I’ve been amazed by what I’ve achieved in the past year. It’s changed my life”

Danielle’s advice:

- Know your market or have some experience of the sector
- Find the right people to work with. Advansys really understood me and my ambitions and helped me bring the business to life
- Be brave, don’t be held back by your own fears

Danielle describes herself as any ‘normal girl’ who likes going out at the weekend, loves clothes and shopping. The success of her business has meant that some of her social life has been affected because she is so busy. But she feels that’s a small price to pay as she is well on her way to realising her dream... A brand new Mercedes SLK.



About Advansys



"a leading provider of high quality specialist ecommerce solutions that fuse innovative technology with stylish design"

Advansys, founded in 2000, is a leading provider of high quality specialist ecommerce solutions that fuse innovative technology with stylish design. We aim to provide the necessary professional expertise and a one-stop shop solution that delivers real business benefit. With offices in the UK, Europe, Asia and USA we are a dynamic company consisting of experienced consultants and ecommerce specialists with many years of industry knowledge spanning not just ecommerce but also the wider aspects of internet marketing.

Advansys approaches projects with energy and commitment and we work in partnership with our clients and partners in driving projects through to a successful conclusion.

To see more customer success stories, or to see what results we can get for you, contact us today.

Advansys Limited
Building 4 Millars Brook
Molly Millars Lane, Wokingham
Berkshire, RG41 2AD

Tel: 0845 838 2700
Fax: 0845 838 2701
Email: sales@advansys.com
Internet: <http://www.advansys.com>