

INTELLIGENT PRINT SOLUTIONS LTD

Intelligent Print Solutions specialises in producing marketing print and direct mail. By investing in client-focused software it has established itself as leaders in the industry, winning major corporate contracts against other, larger competitors.

OBJECTIVES

Producing direct mail and marketing brochures is a highly competitive business. Intelligent Print Solutions Ltd (IPS) operates in this market as one of a large number of suppliers.

Recognising the potential of e-business to change its operation, IPS had a vision of creating a web presence that would substantially improve its service to its existing clients and also increase its chances of winning new business.

By automating its services the company's objective was to speed up its procedures significantly and give its clients a higher level of control over the process.

SOLUTION

IPS knew that it could deploy e-business solutions to cut production costs. But it wanted to go further than this and add significant value to the service it offered. First it carried out three months' of market research, using a specialist company, and found that its customers' top priorities were to be able to stay in control throughout the production process, and to see continuous market innovation.

As a result of this process, IPS developed a specification for a website solution with three key elements to it. One of these elements is a monthly electronic newsletter of industry innovations called 'Insight'.

The other two components form a 'client zone' which is personalised for specific clients, with access controlled by secure login. These two bespoke software elements provide the added value service. They are, 'My Job Bags' which provides the client with information relating to particular orders and 'e-DAC', a stock management system.

Both of these web elements are connected to IPS's internal operating system, which provides the company with supply chain data, project management and accounting functions. In addition, a set of downloadable presentations that explain all these features are available on the website.

Best practice in:
E-business

Sector:
Printing/publishing

Size of firm:
30 employees

Location:
Tonbridge, Kent

Website:
www.ips.tv



“This innovative approach has enabled us to compete with much larger competitors”

GUY MEYERS – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

The resulting combination of functions provides each client with a personalised home page where they can place print orders, track production and delivery, manage stock levels and calculate their expenditure. The system also allows quotes and estimates for jobs to be produced automatically online and this significantly speeds up the full production cycle.

The innovative ‘My Job Bags’ provides IPS with functionality that gives it a competitive edge. “This innovative approach has enabled us to compete with much larger competitors,” says Guy Meyers, Business Development Manager at IPS. “You must speculate to compete nowadays.”

RESULTS

Within 12 months of the launch of the new service, IPS had won five major new contracts with well known blue-chip organisations such as, T-Mobile and ING Direct, “Our IT solution played a vital role in each case,” says Guy.

In this period, the proportion of turnover generated by contracts rose from 35% to 84%, while the company’s turnover generally grew by more than 40%.

CHALLENGES

The company’s website has not yet been optimised to appear near the top of search engines’ listings. Achieving a higher search engine listing could potentially bring in new business. “This is currently being worked on as a priority,” says Guy.


IPS also plans to enhance its website, by following up on the information obtained from regular client surveys and questionnaires. “We intend to integrate our internal network with the site, which will enhance our service automation,” explains Guy. And although the site meets the 1999 Disability Act requirements by offering a real-time contact us facility, Guy says that development is also underway to produce a text-only version.

“We also intend to integrate our intranet with the site, enhancing our service’s automation,” says Guy. “This will let clients carry out remote proofing, to speed up production by cutting the need for wet proofs, and perform online delivery tracking so they can follow packages in real time across Europe.”

Top tips:

- Shifting to an online solution can provide a means to compete for larger contracts.
- When setting up a system, ensure you can provide your customers all the essential information they will need about their orders so they are fully informed over the whole process.



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- Concentrate on developing client-focused software from the outset, and commit to alter it in line with changing customer needs.

THE LAST WORD

Moving to an online system has allowed IPS to enhance and speed up its service and so increase its presence in the market. In turn this has enabled it to out-compete much larger, established rivals.

“Before this focus on technology we were just another print management company, buying and selling print,” says Guy. “Now our service is focused on giving our clients the information to remain in control, and an ability to adapt our solution to every unique client requirement. We would not have enjoyed as much success during the past 18 months had we not invested so heavily in our website and IT solutions.”

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