



CASE STUDY: ARXONTI RALIO & SON

<http://www.ariet.gr>

FACT FILE				
Company name	Arxonti Ralio & Son			
Business Activity	Household Products			
Region	Greece			
Number of employees	4			
Business Range	Local	Regional	National	International
	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Description of market / client / target group	Retail Business Resellers			
Description activities / products / services	Household products (plastics, brooms, kitchen tools, etc.) and bar-restaurant equipment.			

CASE DESCRIPTION:

The business

The company **Arxonti Ralio & Son** imports and sells household products. The commodities are of high quality and are imported from several European suppliers. The company is characterized by high commercial standards, low prices and security.

The firm started its activities as a family-run business operating in small premises of 85 square meters in Thessaloniki (Greece). It imported and sold a small number of products. Over time, the company steadily increased its product range and increased both its staff and its warehousing capabilities. Furthermore, the brand name of the company (“Ariet”) became well-established and most of the products that the company imports are now branded.

The business has expanded its activities and has a warehousing capacity of 500 square meters. The company has three cars/trucks for the transport and delivery of products and has four permanent employees. Financially the company is in a very good position. They have a large number of customers in Greece and the Balkans and have an offering of over 200 product categories.

Introduction of e-business

The company's web site (www.ariet.gr) is the main focus of their web strategy. Through this web site information about the company and its products is given. The product catalogue is available and each item can be ordered online using an e-form. The Web site also possesses a customer feedback option and all emails received are processed by the company. It should also be mentioned that the company plans to have the Web site – available at present in Greek and English - translated into a further three languages: Yugoslav, Russian and Romanian. To date, no on-line payment is available through the Web site.

The management of the company introduced e-business because they are interested in any new technology that can help to improve the quality and speed of the services offered to their customers. Ariet was also interested in promoting its business in Greece and abroad. From a technical point of view the e-business software application package used comes from external software developers and the company seems to be satisfied with it and the specific functions that it provides.

Through its web site the company has increased its customer base and the number of orders placed and is generally satisfied, however some problems and difficulties have also been reported. The company feels that there are no easy and standard procedures for the promotion of a web site in the Internet (Search engines, etc.), and this forces the enterprise to enter their web site in several search engines in order to promote it. Generally, the company believes that the implementation of e-business is beneficial but it also requires continuous effort and significant costs, especially for small businesses.

Lessons learnt

Arxonti Ralio & Son was one of the first companies in Greece to create a Web site and to sell products through the Internet. A significant effort was required for the creation and operation of the web site. Help was sought from advisors and consulting companies and they guided the company on how to implement their e-business strategy at a minimum cost. Even still the company believes that a number of difficulties face companies in the operation and further development of e-business.

The company has future plans to offer a complete e-commerce application through its web site and wants to develop its e-business strategy to take advantage of the possibilities offered by Web marketing, Customer Relationship Management etc. Arxonti Ralio & Son can be considered a good example of a small Greek company that introduced e-business with significant effort, enthusiasm and reaped good results from that effort, as well as planning further developments. What seems to be needed for companies like Arxonti Ralio & Son is more advice and consultancy support for further integrated e-business development.