



# ARJAN'S SHOW-BIZ CENTRE

## CASE STUDY: ARJAN'S SHOW-BIZ CENTRE

<http://www.show-bizcentre.com>

FACT FILE				
Company name	Arjan's Show-Biz Centre			
Business Activity	Mail order firm in show-biz equipment			
Region	The Netherlands			
Number of employees	1.5			
Business Range	Local	Regional	National	International
				Yes
Approximate turnover 2000	expects 50% growth in 2001 compared to 2000			
Description of market / client /target group	Entertainment industry: Make-up artists, magicians, clowns, drama schools, theatres, TV stations, etc.			
Description of activities / products / services	Selling show-biz equipment by mail order: theatrical make-up, magic tricks and illusions, etc.			

## CASE DESCRIPTION:

### The business

Arjan's Show-Biz Centre is a mail-order firm for showbiz equipment. The company sells entertaining and show business equipment such as make-up, magic tricks, illusions, etc. to the entertainment industry. The firm was a small retailer in a specialised sector with a limited turnover.

### Introduction of e-business

Today most articles are sold through their website. The customer can place an order on-line and can choose from a selection of payment methods: credit card, postal cheque (not in the Netherlands), or advance payment. Alternatively, customers in the Netherlands can authorize Arjan's to withdraw the correct amount once from their account. Customers pay in Euros or local currency. There is a shopping cart application which customers can use to generate their orders. It is also possible to type in the orders through an order form, which is then delivered by e-mail at Arjan's. Customers receive a

confirmation of receipt by e-mail when their order arrives at Arjan's. It is also possible to order by telephone or fax. Besides the website, customers can order a paper catalogue which is updated twice a year. However this catalogue is not free of charge.

Arjan's holds very little stock. Most (larger) products are ordered from the supplier when needed. Some products are delivered directly from the supplier to the customer, however most articles are sent via Arjan's. Communication with suppliers is mainly maintained by e-mail or fax.

Orders are prepared for shipment in the company. The invoice is printed directly from the order form. Most shipments are sent by regular mail. Some are delivered by parcels delivery services. When the order is shipped, an email is sent to the customer. In some countries tracking and tracing is available.

Marketing & Sales activities used to be restricted to advertisements in journals, brochures and catalogues. Nowadays, attention is paid mainly to making sure customers find the website when surfing the web. Hardly any paper advertisements are being published now. Arjan's Show-Biz Centre also publishes newsletters to those people who have a subscription. Maintenance of the website is an in-house activity.

### **Lessons Learnt**

The aim to sell their products worldwide has been accomplished. Arjan's now has clients in 65 countries and the company is still growing (expected annual growth 50%). One negative effect has been that there was too much e-mail traffic in the early days, when emails were not yet 'filtered'. Customers used e-mail for all levels of information. This was later solved by classifying and separating individual information from general information. Presenting the latter on the website in a clearly-structured manner, so that the customers could easily find it themselves, worked as a good solution to this problem. Giving visitors much of the information they need directly is also essential and desirable from a legal point of view: to avoid claims (e.g. privacy statement, rules of the shop etc.)

In terms of marketing and public relations work is still needed on the site's accessibility via search-engines. It still needs to come higher up in the rankings of search-engines and should be promoted in all appropriate media.

Finally, one of the important lessons has been that the time spent on maintenance should not be underestimated. Because the website is online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, continuous improvement and maintenance is necessary.

This case offers some valuable insights into how a small local retailer operating in a niche market has been able to expand his market very quickly using 'basic' e-commerce applications. The case also describes the practical problems encountered by a small enterprise when implementing e-business applications.