



CASE STUDY: Banana brothers

<http://www.bananabrothers.co.uk>

FACT FILE				
Company name	Banana Brothers			
Business Activity	Fastfood			
Region	United Kingdom			
Number of employees				
Business Range	Local	Regional	National	International
		Yes		
Description of market / client /target group	Office workers			
Description activities / products / services	soup and sandwich provision			

CASE DESCRIPTION:

The business

Banana Brothers operate a soup and sandwich provision for workers in Glasgow offices, either for collection or for delivery to the office at an appointed time. Whether for personal lunches or for meetings, the service provides for individuals, for offices, or for larger groups. The operation was started by Chris Risbey who arrived in Glasgow in 1993 to study at the Scottish Hotel School in Strathclyde University. His visit to America showed him that there are many innovative ways to brighten the mid-day meal.

Introduction of e-business

Banana Brothers launched a web site to show the daily menu, to show availability of choices, and to allow ordering online. Since late 1999, workers in central Glasgow have been able to browse the constantly innovative menu of Banana Brothers online, or receive it by email. After registering as an online customer, they can also place orders online, either for collection or for delivery. A lot more people now know of Banana Brothers due to Internet access, and even suppliers have contacted them after finding them on the web. Around 600 customers receive the menu via email daily, and can use it to decide before making telephone or personal orders, and can determine delivery time to coincide with meeting breaks etc. or make a personal collection. Customers can also order online and arrange delivery. They can order for vegetarians, and can order both traditional and exotic offerings, including sandwiches, wraps, freshly squeezed juices, etc. They can see if their choices are available, and do not have to wait in a telephone queue to place an order. The customer base is increasing steadily both through discovery on Internet and through word of mouth referrals. The order taking system is also tied to the procurement process and the kitchen is able to ensure ingredients are available for arriving orders.

Lessons Learnt

During **2000** the site was getting approx. 70 hits per day, producing 5 web orders per day and around £20,000 extra income per annum. The operation was streamlined because web orders provide the kitchens with advanced warning of any need to adjust stock levels. A TV documentary featured Banana Brothers because of customer referral, which helped with publicity, and Banana Brothers even use email to keep contact with staff. In **2001** online orders dropped dramatically and it was thought that two reasons contributed. Banana Brothers could not update their own site content, and some orders were not processed through the server on time (due to technical difficulties). A new service has been launched around corporate catering to allow order, confirmation and payment for corporate events, view invoices and order history. This will be the main exploitation route for extending e-business opportunity. Orders are delivered in sealed display platters with disposable plates and cutlery and napkins.

Key Issues:

- Timely processing of orders via Internet.
- Control of web site content.
- Cost-benefit of single order (personal) vs. corporate order (group event).