



CASE STUDY: PHILIPOREILLY.COM

www.philiporeilly.com

FACT FILE				
Company name	Philiporeilly.com			
Business Activity	Property/Insurance/Financial services			
Region	Shannon, Ireland			
Business Range	Local	Regional	National	International
	Yes	Yes		
Description of market / client /target group	The clientele is mainly regional, Philip O'Reilly offers a comprehensive service for anybody living in Clare wanting to purchase a property and/or all related insurance and financial services.			
Description activities / products / services	The company has several lines of activities ranging from: Auctioneer, Estate agent, valuer, mortgage broker, insurance broker and financial services such as investments and pensions			

CASE DESCRIPTION:

The business

It is fair to say that the introduction of e-business in this company is pretty much linked to the vision and the persona of Philip O'Reilly himself. Having been the first property company to have a website in Ireland, the company has now moved well beyond seeing the website as the main focus of their e-business strategy and has gone on to create a totally e-enabled company, re-branding itself as: philiporeilly.com. The company has put a lot of time and effort in rebranding itself as an e-business (slogan: your local globally accessible professional).

Moreover in the past year Philip O'Reilly in partnership with a web developer has worked at creating a complete CRM tool to suit the 3 branches of the business. It is hoped that once this tool has been fine-tuned it may be commercialized and sold to other businesses. The tool was designed both around the customer that it aims to satisfy and around the experience and knowledge of the business instilled by Philip O'Reilly and his staff.

Introduction of e-business

Prior to the introduction of e-business, the company used standard Microsoft software. As the company wished to become the first property web site in Ireland, it required the necessary tools and equipment to create the foundation for the website and make it happen. Having evaluated many alternatives, the company eventually chose three separate solutions for its three core business areas.

The three services (property services, insurance and financial services) are covered by three interrelated e-business software packages. Property Selector, an off-the-shelf software package was chosen for the property services end of the business. Another off-the-shelf product was selected for insurance services. Due to integration problems with the other packages some customisation was needed to this insurance software. The software company responsible for this package decided to integrate some of these as well as other changes and developments made back into the mainstream product. Philip O'Reilly allowed their website to be used for testing these developments.

Unlike the other two software packages, the software for the financial services end of the business was developed in-house. The home-developed software supports marketing and administration, and automatically uploads customer information from the other two software packages, thus forming a bridge between the arms of the business. It also offers the possibility for marketing and relationship management through e-CRM. Part of the e-CRM solutions is the integration of the administrative tasks in the three software packages. The software perfectly fits the business the company is in, and the company intends to commercialise this product.

The company now has a dynamic web site through which it markets its services by means of:

- Online Information on services, such as prices and availability;
- Customer feedback through the site;
- Customer Service & Support online (through e-mail).

Information on new properties is uploaded to the property part of the site as well as the IAVI (Irish Auctioneers and Valuers Institute) website.

What makes the company a smooth running marketing machine, beside the activities listed above, is its integration of the supply chain through the site and the Internet. When a customer wants to know the range of properties currently available, the information is just a mouse click away. Linking sales, customer service and support, and marketing has enabled the company to build long lasting relationships with customers and qualified prospects more easily.

The commitment to changing the business, while driven by Philip O'Reilly, is evident throughout the company. All staff are asked to acquire ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) within 3 months of being recruited. Most administrative tasks have been automated, other than actually posting the brochure when requested via the web site and updating links on the property partner web site. This means that staff are freed for more interesting and challenging work. The staff participate in weekly brainstorming

sessions. They have a strong competency regarding the tools they use and also seem to have a critical view on the changes they want to see happening in the future.

The introduction of e-business also required the purchase of new hardware and software: 1 server, 25 workstations, Z fax, Cat fibre cable, Office professional 2000, Microsoft Suite. An engineer comes on site one day every week.

Lessons Learnt

The result of e-business introduction for the company has been a more integrated business where information is maximised to create business opportunities for every branch of the business. While the total investment of over €300,000 required to implement the e-business strategy may seem prohibitive, the financial results show that turnover has doubled in the past 2 years. In the past 6 months 70% of the people who have bought a house from Philip O'Reilly's have done so having spotted the house on the website first. The company therefore believes that embracing change is the only way to ensure that there will still be a business in 20 years time.