Online Trading

... getting started.

Starting an online shop is a great way of selling your products to a much wider market. Not every product can be sold in this way, but even if a small part of what you offer is suitable, it's worth considering. Remember though, that proper market research and preparation are just as important as for any other commercial activity.

Before starting however, there are a few things you need to beware of ….

1. What is the likely demand, and can you process the orders?

2. How often will the availability and/or price of your items change? This will have an impact on how (and how often) the web site will need updating.

3. How will the goods be shipped to the customer? Bulky, fragile or high value items will need special consideration.

There are also a whole bunch of rules and regulations relating to e-Commerce and 'Distance Selling'. These cover a range of issues, including:

1. Returns and cancellation policy. Your Terms of Business will at the very least need a check over, and revising if needed to ensure compliance.

2. Delivery costs – the customer MUST know these before committing to an order.

See http://www.oft.gov.uk/advice_and_resources/small_businesses/distance-selling/ for more information.

Of key importance is how you want to get paid. There are various possibilities and associated costs depending on your expected turnover from this activity and the number of transactions. See our separate guide for more information and details of the most common payment methods.

There are a number of e-Commerce packages available, all offering different features and degrees of customization. It is important that the 'look and feel' of the shop part of your web site matches that of the rest of the site. Most packages will also require some technical skill to get set up and working.

Custom Internet have developed a comprehensive e-Commerce package which can be customized to the parent web site and offers a wide range of options, making it suitable for sites selling just a few items, as well as those offering many thousands. A full feature list is available on request.

How we can help

Call us for advice on e-Commerce solutions, payment gateway integration, site hosting and design.