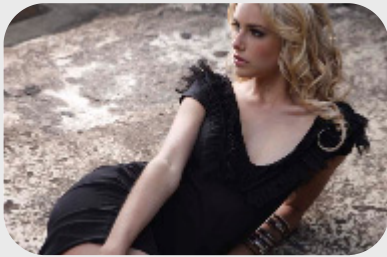


Talulah designs a profitable future



Customer: Talulah

Key facts:

- Fashion design business
- Sales channel of 100 boutiques
- Established 2005

Challenge:

- Needed a fresh, stylish website to reflect the brand
- Site needs to be easy to manage and update with new collections

Solution:

- Web design and hosting from Melbourne IT SMB eBusiness Solutions

Results:

- 6,000 unique visitors per month
- 5,000 customers signed up for electronic marketing

Breaking into the \$14 billion Australian Fashion Industry is not easy. Being creative and having great designs provides no guarantee of success; according to the Council of Textile & Fashion Industries of Australia, the rate of failure for fashion labels in the first 12 months of operation is 68%. But that doesn't stop a raft of young hopefuls trying to make it big in fashion each year.

"We see a lot of new labels launching all the time," says Bradley Lloyd, director of fashion label Talulah. "New entrants in the market can use the Internet to very quickly show off their designs quite inexpensively, and the web has made it seem easier to get started. But the key to long term survival is combining fashion design creativity with sound business fundamentals, and knowing how to use the web properly to build a trusted brand."

Bucking the survival trend

Lloyd's partner, Kelli Wharton, started Talulah eight years ago in her flat as a side project while she was working in the fashion industry and getting an understanding of how to build a successful label. Three years later, she decided to take the plunge and Talulah was born.

Building a network of boutiques to sell the label's collections was a vital first step in building the business, and through sales agents Talulah grew its retail coverage to get the clothes out in the market. Alongside the push to recruit retailers however was the need to create a website that showed off the label in the best possible way.

"The design of the Talulah website was vital when we established the brand. We needed something that reflected what our label was all about – distinctive, fashionable, and effortlessly chic – while at the same time presenting our collections to retailers in an attractive and engaging way," Lloyd says.

"Having a professional looking website was also vital to show prospective boutique partners that we were serious about the business."

Building a successful platform

Talulah engaged Melbourne IT's SMB eBusiness Solutions to help build and host the label's website and make sure it had the right functionality as well as a look and feel which reflected the brand.

In addition to having all the label's recent collections available to view, the Talulah website includes links to all stockists and an online shop for direct sales. The heavy use of professional imagery gives the site a slick and stylish feel while at the same time, ensuring the designs are front and centre of every page.

“The website is our primary marketing vehicle so making sure it reflects our brand and is engaging for visitors is essential

Bradley Lloyd, Director, Talulah



“The website is our primary marketing vehicle so making sure it reflects our brand and is engaging for visitors is essential,” Lloyd says. “We try to keep it fresh as much as we can, with the plan to deliver five new collections per year driving the need for new looks in-store and online.

“We have two primary audiences for the site. The first is our boutiques who stock Talulah designs – we have more than 100 boutiques who sell our collections – we like to use the website to provide a sneak peek at new collections before they go on sale to encourage demand and get our retailers excited,” he says.

“We’ve also begun building a loyal fan base among our target customer audience (the 18-30 female demographic) so the site needs to appeal to them as well while also rewarding that loyalty as our brand becomes more well-known.”

Talulah has built a newsletter database of more than 5,000 people through which it alerts fans of new collections, promotions and sales. In addition, the label maintains an active Facebook page which helps drive traffic through to the main website.

“We want to make the site as engaging as possible by linking to our social media pages, and have the ability to roll out promotional codes and so on to our customer base. But striking that balance between direct sales and promoting the interests of our boutiques is very important to us. Our boutiques are a vital part of our success and we want to make sure we retain their support,” Lloyd says.

Engaging and growing Talulah’s online future

With the Talulah website now attracting an average of 6,000 unique visitors per month, Lloyd says the label is now starting to look at new ways to engage with its young, tech-savvy clientele.

“Talulah is planning to be at Rosemount Fashion Week in 2011 and we’re looking at setting up a live stream of the show our website, and potentially having video on demand of this and other fashion show appearances that we do as we become more active at events,” he says.

“We’re also investigating developing an iPhone and iPad application for Talulah. The 18-30 year old forward female market wants something new, something different in fashion, and so we think an app that helps this market discover our collections easily complements our online strategy and would encourage more sales for us and our boutiques.”

Success by design

Now entering its sixth successful year in business, Talulah has defied the industry burnout rates but Lloyd says the label is not getting carried away.

“This is a very competitive industry, there are always lots of hot young labels trying to break in. However we have established a network of trusted suppliers, supportive boutiques, and sales traction to give us momentum – as well as a growing brand that we have crafted carefully.

“The online presence is vital to developing our brand and building trust in our company – while we’re not a start-up anymore, we have to keep innovating online as well as on the clothing rack to stay fresh and relevant to our audience and Melbourne IT helps us do that.

“Melbourne IT has been very supportive to us and their assistance in developing our website was crucial in building our online marketing strategy. Our online presence is at the heart of our brand and they are our trusted partner.”

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