

Elysée Cosmetics Ltd

A customised eCommerce shopping solution

Background - Elysée Cosmetics

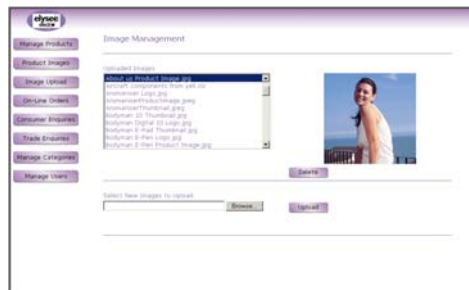
Elysée Cosmetics Ltd design and manufacture electrical personal health and beauty products such as hair removers and home exercise machines.

Their business success is based on sales to major cosmetics retailers and department stores as well as smaller cosmetics traders. As a result Elysée were very keen not to upset their current customer relationships by selling online and for this reason had been reluctant to venture into online selling direct to consumers. However they have been successfully selling their products direct to customer using mail-order for some-time.



A key aspect of the Elysée product range is their accessories. End users often need replacement accessories after repeated use such as the massage gel which comes with their RollerCell Massage product. These products are not major revenue earners but form an important part of the product's after-sales service.

The business challenge – trade and consumer



Elysée had no experience of web software and had not even a brochure web site. Their U.S. partners had ventured into selling via the web and Elysée UK were keen to demonstrate they could offer a better solution to the UK market.

To maintain the relationship with their existing trade customer base the objective was to offer an online product catalogue. This would enable trade customers to search the catalogue, get basic product information such as pallet weights and place online enquires. This was the primary objective of the project in line with the marketing strategy.

A secondary objective was to make it possible for end users to order replacement accessories via the web as well as buy new products.

The challenge for the project team was to deliver a solution which met the dual objectives of a trade product catalogue as well as a consumer online selling direct the customer.

Our approach – the project

Initial meetings with the Elysée directors confirmed the business strategy and the project scope and objectives. We were also able to discuss the options for accepting credit card payments online and agree the use of a 3rd party credit processor. From our experience of eCommerce Shopping projects we knew this to be a risk to the project schedule. The legal and financial complications of accepting credit card payments are often a big hurdle.



The requirement was now pretty well understood, nevertheless a formal analysis and design process was followed to ensure the details were documented, confirmed and well communicated across the project team. Indeed a number of key requirements were identified during review of the functional specification and prototype site design.

Following the system build Elysée were invited to review a test version of the solution and feedback. This again produced positive improvements before delivery of the final product.

At the implementation stage we supported Elysée in loading all product data as well as providing a hands-on training session at our offices in Surbiton for all the order handling team.

The project was delivered in 3 months and successfully implemented on our web hosting facility at Telehouse.

We were very fortunate on the project to have the Elysée Graphic Designer, Lynne Morinan on board with the team. Lynne has many years experience working with Elysée Cosmetics and was able to provide valuable understanding of the business and its operations. Lynne also provided all the graphic design and product photographs for the site.



The resulting system – a customised Parabola Solution

To meet the dual trade and consumer site objectives a single web site was provided with two views of the product catalogue and distinct user interfaces. The trade user view provides information for bulk ordering and relevant product attributes such as shipping carton sizes. The consumer view provides retail pricing and allows online purchasing. Both views utilise a shopping cart function to allow the user to store products before purchase or ordering.



The system was based upon the Parabola eCommerce Shopping solution. The product catalogue is managed via an admin interface which is secure and easy to use.

The credit card payments are handled via Worldpay with a seamless interface to the payment pages. The order information is captured first on the Elysée server before the payment details are captured and validated on the Worldpay server. The payment transaction is immediate

and the order handling team receives an email confirming the transaction but have no access to the credit card details to ensure the security of the transaction. A complete audit log is maintained by Worldpay so that each transaction can be viewed by the order handling team online. In addition all order details (shipping, products ordered etc) are maintained on Elysée's database where they can be viewed or analysed at any time.

Technology – a scalable robust solution

The Parabola eCommerce shopping solution was built from the ground up as an ASP.NET solution. It was designed to make the most the .NET advances in reusability, security and robustness.

The ASP.NET software design has a separate data access layer to enable any database backend. In this case SQL Server 2000 was adopted as the most secure and scalable solution with purpose built data providers from Microsoft .NET.

A high level of security for the credit card payment is ensured by the use of the Worldpay processing.

The site is hosted on a dual Xeon processor server, at our Telehouse hosting facility. The hosting includes access to DeepMetrix LiveStats which is currently the best log analyser available on the market.

Conclusions - The business benefits

The primary objective of delivering a product catalogue for trade customers has been achieved on schedule and within budget.

The system immediately attracted attention via the web and orders were placed for replacement parts within 24 hours of the site being live. The potential is there to sell the Elysée products direct to the consumer via the web. To date Elysée have chosen not to pursue this option and continue concentrate their business on the wholesale trade market.

Recently Denise Saunders, Financial Director at Elysée, commented:

"Our eCommerce web site has been a great success. We entered into eCommerce with no experience and little knowledge of how our business could sell via the web. Parabola gave us all the help and support we could have asked for and made it seem easy to begin trading over the internet."

References / Links

Elysée site: <http://www.elysee.co.uk>

Worldpay credit card processing: <http://www.worldpay.com>

DeepMetrix LiveStats web log analyser: <http://www.deepmetrix.com>

Further information

For further details and a quote based upon your particular requirements please contact Richard Gray + 44 (0) 20 8399 5920, rg@parabolasoft.co.uk