

ADAPTAWEAR clothing for care

Kavita Chauhan (R) with Mark Bonnett of the National B2B Centre.



E-business is the perfect fit for adaptive clothing company

Kavita Chauhan is a fully qualified optometrist and had been performing eye tests in nursing homes in the West Midlands area.

Although she was satisfied that there was a strong provision for people in terms of glasses, Kavita felt that those with disabilities were being let down when it came to clothing.

Some people were finding it hard to dress themselves in conventional clothing and their carers were struggling too.

Kavita researched the market to see if there were clothes out there for people with conditions such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and arthritis but found no real answers and limited availability.

So, she decided to launch a business that would sell adapted clothing to those people with such conditions to assist them in dressing easily as well as some clothes to assist carers with dressing others.

"You wouldn't believe the problems people can have with zips or

buttons," said Kavita. "Unless you have a condition like this you just don't think about it.

"But because of my time in nursing homes I had seen the problem first hand and thought there must be an easier way."

She sourced suppliers and designers to create garments that are fashionable and 'normal' in appearance, yet have special practical features to aid dressing – such as hidden Velcro on shirts and blouses, or trousers that can open down, past the hips. Her simple yet effective designs aim to revolutionise clothing for people with physical limitations.

Once all of that was in place, Kavita needed to get the word out about her Adaptawear business to as many people and organisations as possible.

The Web and Search Engine Optimisation

Before officially launching, Kavita carried out a series of trials and generated considerable interest – enough to make it a viable business.

But she knew the importance of a website for the profile of the company and spoke to the National B2B Centre.

After receiving advice and assistance from the centre, the firm launched www.adaptawear.co.uk to correspond with an official launch event at the College of Occupational Therapists Annual Conference.

The website offers details of the clothing offered by Adaptawear and also has e-commerce facilities allowing people to order online.

The National B2B Centre offered Kavita advice on how to ensure a strong presence on search engines, such as Google, through optimisation.

Now, if you type in, say, 'clothing arthritis' it appears on the first page of Google.

Results

Since the launch, the success has been phenomenal with orders being placed from all over the country.

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The website's search engine optimisation is attracting people to the website and so far that is generating more than 50 per cent of the company's overall sales.

And the fact that they are coming in nationally proves the worth of the site.

Kavita said: "I've just taken an order from Jersey and there is no way that would have happened had we not had the website – or indeed such a strong presence on the search engines.

"We are finding that many people are discovering us through the web and then contacting us with further questions before they place the order.

"It's such a new market that customers just want to make sure they know what we are all about. But we are seeing sales made direct on the web through our secure e-commerce facility and that will continue to increase."

The Future

The company is still very young but e-business is seen very much as the driving force behind its future marketing.

Forums are being set up on the site to discuss issues around clothing for people with certain disabilities which is intended to attract more hits to the site.

Kavita said: "From what I have seen so far, the majority of my future sales are going to come from the website so it is something I have to utilise to the maximum."

Mark Bonnett, of the National B2B Centre – the e-business centre of excellence for the West Midlands, said: "Search engines such as Google are now one of the first ports of call when people are searching for any kind of product.

"If you can make sure your business is prominent on one or more search engines when relevant words are typed in, and your website is of the right calibre, it will undoubtedly generate sales."

Do you want more people to find your website? Do you want to ensure your web pages are found by prospects?

If you would like advice on optimising your website for search engines contact the National B2B Centre using the details below.

Tips for Search Engine Optimisation

- To ensure your website is visible in the major search engines, such as Google and MSN, it should be optimised with keywords that match the search terms people will use to find your products and services
- The keywords are those words that the search engines reads, including page titles (the text that appears in the top left bar of your web browser), page descriptions, headings, link text and page text
- To differentiate from the competition you should use keyword phrases, as well as single keywords, to increase the chance of your website being found in search results
- To see how many pages of your website are ranked in Google or any other search engine type in link:www.yourdomainname.co.uk into the search engine search bar
- The Google Webmaster page provides further information on search engine optimisation, indexing and ranking <http://www.google.co.uk/webmasters>
- To assess your website's current search engine performance use the National B2B Centre's SEO tool at <http://www.nb2bc.co.uk/seo>



The National B2B Centre

Helping growing businesses make smart e-business decisions

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