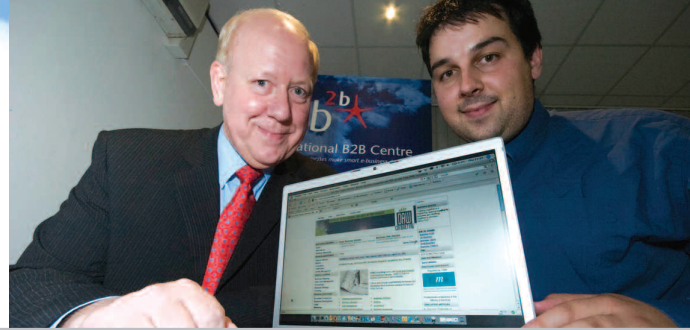




David Willetts (left) with Mark Bonnett
of the National B2B Centre



Business booms for consultant as open source helps him to make a mark on the web

David Willetts formed DAW Consulting Limited, a Kingswinford based business consultancy firm, in 2002.

As a qualified accountant with several years of experience in industry he had an inside track in business, and the necessary skills to help other companies improve their business performance and profitability.

Since 2002, he has worked for a number of SMEs in interim roles and on a consultancy basis, in areas including financial management, business planning, strategic management and business turnaround.

The businesses in which he has worked have been of varying sizes but most ranged from one to 50 employees and have included start-ups, fast growing companies and businesses needing financial expertise in their skill set.

He realised early on that a web presence was necessary in order to attract clients, increase the brand awareness and to grow the company.

The Web

David originally approached Business Link which helped him launch a site which was a basic source of information.

“I was delighted with the support they gave me and the website was fine but had its limitations,” said David. “In a way it was just like having my CV on-line for everyone to see.

“I knew that I wanted more facilities available to me and needed to have more overall control of the site. I came across the National B2B Centre which introduced me to open source software.

“That was the pathway to having more influence over the site and to utilising its capabilities even further.”

Open Source Software

Originally using PostNuke – an open source content management system– he was given greater control and management of the site.

But, through the National B2B Centre adviser Mark Bonnett, David soon switched to another open source content management system called Joomla.

The software allowed for enhanced control and makes it easier to manage www.dawconsulting.co.uk than it ever had been before.

David said: “Joomla has proved to be a great tool and has really expanded the capabilities of our website. The many templates and add-ons, such as newsletters and e-commerce facilities, are freely available allowing you to easily customise your site.

“The National B2B Centre has also shown me ways of improving my standing on search engines such as Google so more and more traffic is driven my way.

“The site is now attracting more visitors because of that, which is very good news for business.”

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Results

Since moving to using the Joomla content management system in October 2006, the popularity of the site has increased dramatically with visitors from more than 40 countries visiting the site each month.

David has secured a series of contracts as a direct result of his web presence including engagements abroad.

"It's always the most difficult question to answer when people ask how much business you have won because of the site," he said. "But I know for a fact it has directly led to much more work for me.

"And, also, you know that people have been checking the site to get a little bit of faith in you and the business before picking up the phone."

Indeed, a spin off from the website has been approached by other website operators requesting to publish David's business articles on their sites.



The Future

After discovering the potential of using open source software, it is not something David is going to give up in a hurry.

He wants to keep abreast of all the latest developments to see if he is able to implement further changes to his site that make it more attractive to visitors as well as being quicker and easier to update.

The continual release of new open source software allows for the site to be refreshed as desired, but importantly David can easily update content at his convenience.

"Ultimately it's about enhancing the business," he said. "And this has certainly helped me to do that."

Martin King-Turner, of the National B2B Centre – the e-business centre of excellence for the West Midlands, said: "Open source software is a great way for businesses to maintain overall control of what appears on their website and make it work for them.

"DAW Consulting has certainly benefited from that and it has increased the business's presence and growth."

Do you want to take control of your website content or update it regularly? Do you want to discover the benefits of free open source content management systems?

If you would like open source advice please contact the National B2B Centre using the details below.

Using an Open Source Content Management System

- Open Source software is free; there are no licence fees to use this software
- Using an Open Source content management system empowers businesses with complete control of their website content, including text and images
- The Open Source content management software Joomla can be downloaded from www.joomla.org
- Open Source software provides many alternatives to proprietary software; as well web content management systems, software includes customer relationship management systems, web browsers, email clients, photo editing, word processing and spreadsheet creation
- Open Source software is supported by major industry vendors, such as IBM, HP, Novell, Computer Associates, Sun Microsystems and Oracle
- To drive more traffic to your website, like DAW Consulting did, pick up fact sheets and tools from the B2B Centre's e-marketing toolbox at www.nb2bc.co.uk/toolboxes/marketing_online.



The National B2B Centre

Helping growing businesses make smart e-business decisions

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