

Case Study

Orb International



Company overview

Background Orb International was established in 2004 and is one of the leading suppliers of corporate and promotional merchandise items and one of the largest independent sourcing houses, servicing many blue chip companies in the UK.

While their customer base is predominantly UK based, they do work with a few companies overseas – mostly subsidiaries or parents of the UK company.

Orb are about to embark on a KTP project which will result in the creation of a fully fledged state of the art e-Business solution that combines web site, e-commerce, CRM and back office integration.

Web site: www.orbkms.com

Feasibility Study

As a precursor to the KTP project, the feasibility study undertaken by the Centre investigated the level of bespoke development that would be required to produce the type of e-business solution Orb was looking for.

The feasibility study aimed to work with Orb to produce a list of what they required in terms of functionality from the proposed new system and give them advice on whether this could be achieved with an 'off the shelf' product or would have to be developed bespoke.

Once it was determined what the system was required to do, an indepth investigation was carried out to determine if there were any e-commerce platforms available that would meet Orb's requirements.



The outcome

From the findings of the feasibility study it is estimated that approximately 60-70% of the functionality required for the the new system will be available off the shelf from both commercial and open source products. The remaining functionality will have to be developed bespoke.

The main areas of bespoke work required are:

- Integrating with the Sage back office system currently in place (depending on the platform chosen as some of the ones highlighted provide this off the shelf)
- Customisation of products during the check out process e.g. allowing customers to upload logos etc. and be able to get realistic previews of what the finished item will look like

A report was produced for Orb International detailing the following:

- An overview of the functionality required by the proposed system and an outline of the type of hardware set up required for such a system
- A short list of possible platforms with detailed comparisons of each
- An outline of the pros and cons of an 'off the shelf' versus bespoke development and recommendations of the best solution for Orb's e-commerce solution
- A high level look at usability best practice