

Zenago
Solutionists
Iconz

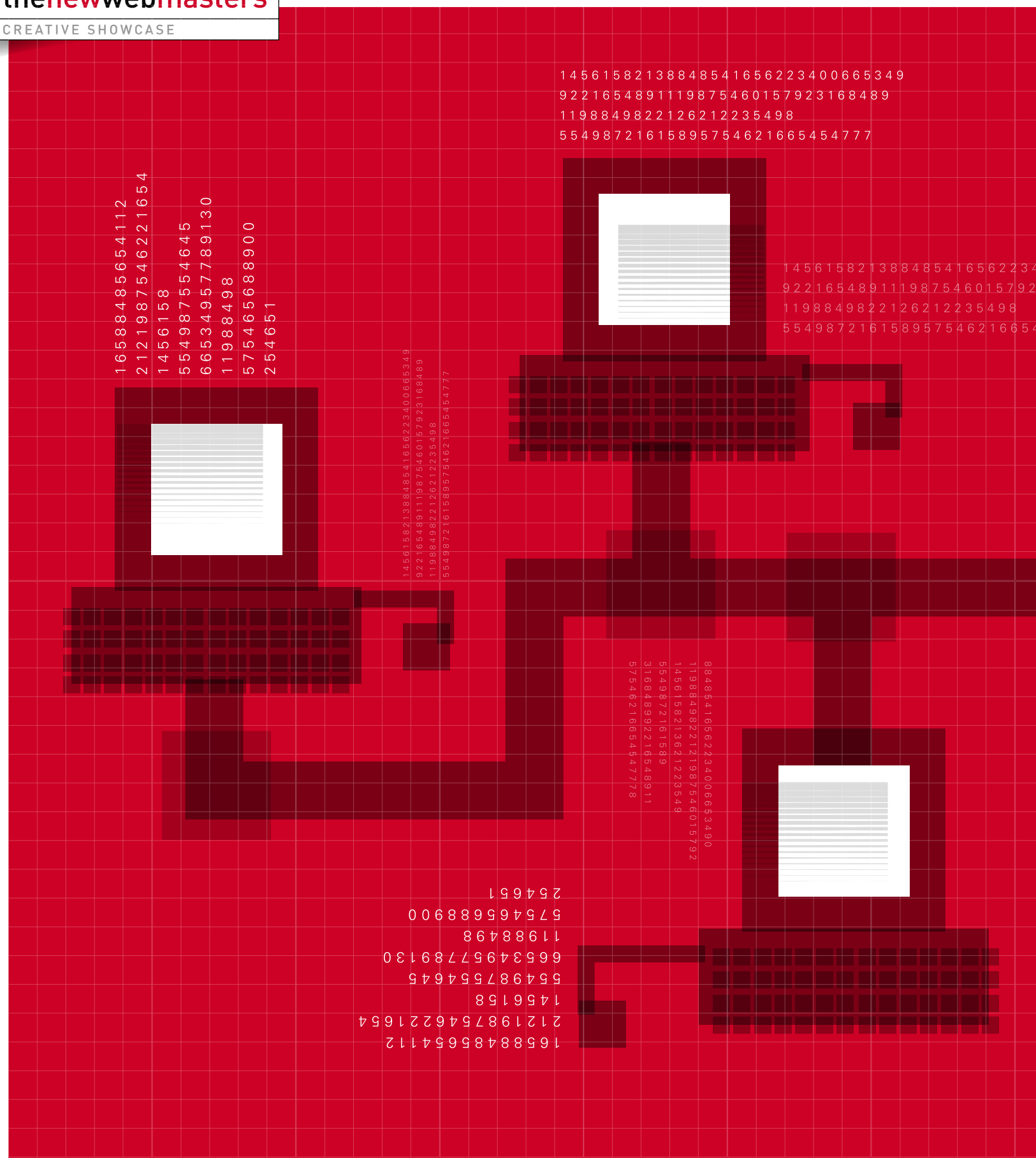
thenewwebmasters

CREATIVE SHOWCASE

Introducing the next generation of web development

Its 15 years since the World Wide Web was born and we now live in a wired world. Web advertising is growing at 40 percent per annum, some 75 percent of New Zealanders are regular Internet users—and some of our richest people are web entrepreneurs.

Yet doing business successfully on the web remains unexplored and often mysterious to many Kiwi business people. Here's how three companies are leading the way.



Business as usual 2.0

How did we ever do business without the web?

If you've ever found yourself at a complete loose end when the Internet's down, you'll know how much the Internet has become as essential as telephones and trousers.

Statistics from Nielsen show that New Zealanders are enthusiastic users of the Internet, with over 80 percent of the population online, and over 50 percent of those people connecting through high-speed broadband (or at least the highest speed available in New Zealand). Nearly half of this country's Internet users planned at least one online purchase for Christmas 2007.

In the US, eMarketer.com says retail ecommerce growth has been up to 32.6 percent in recent years, compared with average real-world retail growth of between two and six percent.

The Internet is changing people's habits. Trade Me taught us we could sell stuff without having to go through an intermediary. YouTube showed us that we could become a TV star. Blogs meant we could publish our thoughts instantly to a potential audience of thousands.

Businesses, too, are discovering what the Internet can do for them. Here are just four.

1. Save save save!

From Trade Me to Facebook, the Internet is about making things more efficient. (Facebook? Efficient? Yes, it's true. Facebook may be great for time wasting, but isn't that time wasting done in a tremendously efficient manner?)

Businesses are automating core processes on the web, such as taking orders (takeaway food outlets) and booking

appointments (mortgage brokers and real estate agents).

They're cutting down on the retail space needed to provide a good service, instead providing the information customers need online.

Behind the scenes, business are using Internet tools such as Voice over IP (VoIP) to make their telephone systems more affordable and more flexible.

2. Better, faster, deeper

Today's customers are well-educated. No longer can retailers assume a shopper enters their store as a blank slate. The Internet offers buying research in minutes, and consumers are using it for extensive pre-purchase research. The greater the investment, the more energy people are putting into their research online before setting foot in a physical retail store.

Smart companies are taking advantage of this, using their websites as rich mines of information, and helping customers make a well-informed decision.

When ecommerce, or selling products online, first became a possibility in the late 1990s, sceptics said some categories would be hard or impossible to sell online, such as motor vehicles, clothing and furniture. These important buying decisions needed a buyer to see and touch the product before buying.

Surprise, surprise. Those three categories are among the most popular online categories, thanks to pre-purchase research—online and offline working together to connect customers with the products they want.

3. Go global

The Internet removes borders. Locality doesn't mean much any more—and that cuts both ways.

For online-only retailers like Waikato-based bike and accessory shop Torpedo7, breaking into a new market is simple. For just a few hundred dollars, Torpedo7 entered the Australian scene with a few highly targeted text ads on Australian websites. It's an exponentially lighter support structure than setting up an office in Sydney.

Even if your company doesn't want to go global, your customers may. Hitwise's local competitiveness index shows that in some retail categories, 50 percent of local traffic is going to overseas websites. The best example of this is book retailer Amazon.com. By making it easy for people to buy and personalising the customer experience, Amazon has become more relevant to many New Zealanders than the corner bookstore down the street.

4. Discover people power

Books like *The Wisdom of Crowds*, *Wikinomics* and *We are Smarter Than Me* show the power of communities to transform the world of business.

As one of this month's case studies, catchacrim.co.nz, shows, the Internet enables people to cooperate for positive change like never before.

'Web business' used to mean something different from 'business'. Now it's taking business itself to a whole new place. Welcome to the new world of the webmasters.

Crime fighting on the web

Neighbourhood watch goes digital with catchacrim.co.nz

When Stephen Potter found himself confronted by an aggressive car thief wielding a screwdriver he discovered first hand the helplessness facing many victims of crime. He didn't want to sit back and simply be the victim, but there seemed to be no way to get involved with collecting information and solving the crime even though there were plenty of other witnesses.

The Hamilton-based commercial lawyer decided to do something constructive and came up with the idea for a website dedicated to helping crime victims collect information to help catch criminals involved in crimes such as theft and vandalism. The idea for catchacrim.co.nz was born.

"I felt that there had to be a place to go with some information about the crime," says Potter. It really bothered him that valuable information was being lost because there was

nowhere for people to record what they saw. "Catchacrim isn't so much for solving the crime but for information gap filling."

Zenago Crime solving partner

Potter investigated a number of avenues for bringing his project to life. He interviewed several web development companies, but found very few willing or able to take the time to understand what he wanted to achieve.

"A lot of people said different things, that it would take a couple of weeks, that it would cost three to four thousand dollars, but they weren't being realistic, they didn't understand my needs," says Potter.

Finally a recommendation from within the industry led Potter to Zenago. From the word go he was impressed with Zenago's professionalism and knowledge. Their

willingness to contribute ideas, advice on possible web solutions and marketing strategies impressed him.

"I appreciated the up front honesty about the cost of production, something other companies were very vague about," he says.

In the initial stages Zenago met with Potter several times to discuss the project brief, understand the success criteria and map out the strategies most likely to achieve that success.

From there Zenago designed a set of blueprints to demonstrate the structure and flow of the site. This approach meant the concept could be thoroughly checked from the end-user's perspective before any complex development began.

Launched just recently, the site allows those who have been wronged to get online, post their crime and receive feedback from people in the community. Users are able to select from regions throughout New Zealand and report crimes from their local area. They can also post information on offences against individuals, private property and those that have no direct or intended victim.

"To put it simply, if you want to know what's going on in your community then check out Catchacrim," says Potter.

Anyone can post a crime for a small fee with the ability to upgrade the listing. The website gives users the ability to describe the crime, the time it was committed, where it happened and to include any associated images such as a photo of a stolen car, items taken or graffiti on a fence.

Replies containing information about the crimes can be viewed and a communication channel opened between the victim and the informant. For Potter this ability to interact with witnesses is crucial.



Zenago's design allowed catchacrim.co.nz to scale not just for national growth, but also to expand overseas

Members are awarded a rating, similar to Trademe, on the basis of their posting and the relevance of the information they provide, creating a community of qualified and reliable supporters for victims of crime.

Creating a global online neighbourhood watch

Potter says everybody he's spoken to is very positive about the Catchacrim concept; perhaps because it rides the current groundswell of interest in getting involved and taking the control back from criminals.

"They can't believe it hasn't been done before. Everybody relates their stories about their experiences and Catchacrim is seen as a solution. Often crimes are unresolved and I

think Catchacrim can help."

Even though catchacrim.co.nz is pretty new in the local market, Potter is thinking big. He's on a mission to take his concept to the world, starting with New Zealand, and developing a group of global online neighbourhood watch communities.

"Catchacrim is great for New Zealand. Once we take it overseas to the likes of Australia and the US, it will be great for those countries too but we'll also have a revenue stream coming back to New Zealand," says Potter, who sees catchacrim.co.nz fitting well with New Zealand's knowledge based export drive.

"The ideas we have as Kiwis need to be taken offshore; they need to go to overseas markets. If we don't, you can make yourself

rich but you're not supporting the economy, the community and ultimately the country."

Overall Potter really appreciated the structured and sensible approach that Zenago provided. He says he's happy with the entire process from start to finish.

"I don't regret for one moment choosing Zenago. I can't fault anything."

The results will speak for themselves; a community empowered to work together to solve crime. Now that has to be a good thing.

For more information go to www.zenago.co.nz

Kiwi labels take it online

Real solutions for fashion companies taking on e-tailing

The fashion and apparel market saw the largest growth of all online shopping sectors in 2007—this year outselling computers in the US, historically the leader.

According to US research, online shoppers spent US\$18.3 billion on clothes and shoes in 2006, compared with only US\$17.2 billion on computer hardware and software. In the UK, Internet clothing sales reached US\$1.2 billion in 2006, an increase of 461 percent over the last five years.

Fashion sites are attracting both women and men who find that shopping online fits in well with their busy schedules.

With this trend expected to continue, forward-thinking New Zealand clothing brands have been turning to the internet to promote their brands and generate sales. And they have good reason to do this.

Figures gathered in 2006 by Statistics New Zealand show that those aged 25 to 44 are most likely to purchase online. Of those 38.9 percent had actually made a purchase on the Internet. Clearly, the old fears around the security of

online transactions and concerns about quality and fit have well and truly dissipated.

One concern persists for businesses—how to ensure that the investment involved in a website generates the right return. The fashion industry is fast-moving. Each season looks change, stock levels vary minute-by-minute and relationships with outlets can be sensitive. Add to that the fact that each garment can have many different colour and size options, and you have a complex set of requirements.

Auckland web technology company, Solutionists, has helped several fashion names online. Each has a subtly different set of requirements.

Barkers men's clothing www.barkersonline.co.nz

When Barkers decided to help fundraise for the Prostate Cancer Foundation with a line of celebrity-designed boxer shorts, they needed to reach as many people as possible. They were determined to do everything that they could to raise money for the foundation and this meant

taking their Barkers Prostate Cancer Boxers along with their entire summer 2007 range online.

"This was a really tough brief—complex with lots of features, a tight budget and even tighter deadline. The fact that Barkers were doing this, not just to improve their business, but also to give something back really drove the team on," says Duncan Shand of Barker's strategic marketing partners, InsideOut.

The biggest challenge, however, was the timeline—allowing only seven weeks from Solutionists' appointment to go live with a full e-commerce site.

Barkers managing director Zac de Silva recognised this ability to meet the deadline was a key element of the project. "It was really important for us to have a company we could trust that spoke our language and that was committed to delivering a great product on time for us."

To ensure stock levels for the website and stores are kept up to date, the website was integrated with Barkers' SQL administration system and each item's stock level is updated

every two minutes from Barkers central POS software, Infinity. Customers can log in and check with the status of any of their orders thanks to the built in shipping tracking system.

Ultimately, despite the very tight deadline, the site went live four days early and on the first day of operation outsold four of the bricks and mortar stores.

"This was a really great project for us. The brief pushed us to develop some new capabilities but to deliver the site early was really satisfying," says Frank Gilbert, Solutionists managing director.

Sabatini www.sabatini.co.nz

Designed and manufactured in New Zealand, Sabatini's innovative knit designs are currently sold in 80 outlets in Europe with over 200 outlets in Australia and New Zealand.

As a manufacturer, the company was not looking to sell online but to support its retailers by providing a showcase for the entire Sabatini White and Sabatini collections, making it easy to review the range and find a local retailer.

Solutionists produced an individually branded Look Book for each collection that displays a photograph of each garment, along with the product code, yarn composition and a link through to the stockists locator. The display of the colourways presented another challenge as each garment has at least two colours. How do you show colour combinations and textures of knit fabrics to their best advantage? The swatches were scanned and loaded into the website allowing thumbnails of the actual swatches to be generated and displayed on the website.

"We went to Solutionists to design a website from an international exporter's point of view and we've had immediate success



with customers around the world responding positively on how easy it was to navigate and understand the Sabatini brand," says Tony Milich, Sabatini's managing director.

The Styling Room www.thestylingroom.co.nz

Created for the busy woman, The Styling Room is a new concept in online shopping. Inspired by trunk shows overseas, The Styling Room offers complete events held in a boutique style starting with champagne and canapés and a short fashion show followed by the opportunity to purchase from the multi-brand collection of clothing and accessories with the assistance of professional stylists. Therapists from Forme spa assist with skin care concerns and the latest make-up looks. It is the 'boutique with benefits' and has already proven to be a great success in New Zealand.

Event bookings are made online through a customised form, including a payment gateway. Once the purchase has been accepted, the customer is forwarded to a 'wish-list' form, so they can let the stylists know before the event the items they are looking for, along with their body type and personal style.

"This process of forwarding our customers a personalised 'wishlist' has been invaluable

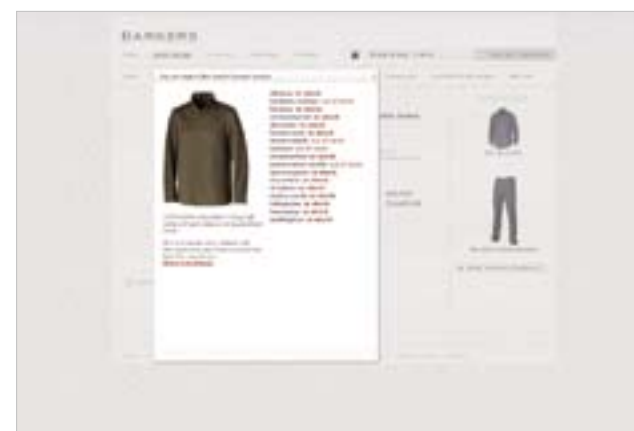
in determining a customer's requirements prior to them attending an event. It also helps us to ascertain what stock items are likely to be purchased during the event," says Alicia Redman, director of The Styling Room.

An online boutique was recently added to the site providing the same stylish clothing and accessories available at the events to customers, any time. Products are displayed by garment type as well as in the complete designer collections. Once a visitor has clicked to a product display page, they can read through styling notes written for each individual product that give advice on accessorising the look and links through to the products suggested.

Redman is particularly pleased with this sales support functionality. "Having the ability to encourage add-on sales in a subtle manner through styling suggestions is a great way for us to increase our sales."

With three such diverse fashion houses having successful websites, you could be forgiven for saying that this season's look is definitely online!

For more information go to
www.solutionists.co.nz
or call Steve Crowe +64 9 630-3074



Choosing the right host

Keep in mind the bigger picture

Managing business growth has always been a challenge. These days the complexity is increased with the need to manage the ever-expanding needs of your website and online presence. The hosting solution that seemed perfect a year ago might no longer be enough for the new technologies and functionalities that are now today's imperative. And as for next year, who can tell?

So how do you know when your hosting solution is no longer adequate? You might be expanding your online strategies to include site-specific software, ecommerce or larger databases. Perhaps you've noticed a slowdown in your site response rates or have experienced a security breach. Whatever the triggers that bring you to the moment of truth, choosing a new hosting provider is a major and often complex decision.

Web development and online solutions company Zenago found themselves in just such a position.

The problem

Crunch time came when Zenago recognised the costs and poor productivity associated with dealing with support staff at multiple hosting providers. Founded in 2000, Zenago had grown from a small company with just a few customers managed on a variety of shared hosting servers, to one with a strong client base in New Zealand, Australia and the UK. As the number of clients grew and the complexity of the solutions provided by Zenago increased the status quo had to change.

Choosing a single hosting provider isn't easy. Zenago mapped out the key factors that had to be considered. Obviously 24/7/365 support should be an absolute prerequisite from any provider. However there are also options such as SSL (secure servers) and databases to consider. Zenago also required the facility to process credit card payments through its clients' websites.

As the team at Zenago started to look around, they found that much of the literature available

about hosting focused on simply listing and explaining the components that are required by an organisation to get started. However, hosting solutions provider WebFarm approaches the subject somewhat differently. Its focus is on the importance of thinking long-term and understanding its customers' online strategy. For Zenago this was just what it was looking for.

WebFarm led Zenago through a discovery process to fully understand its needs. Everything from the support requirements through to server types and components required were discussed both in terms of current and future requirements.

"Initially it was the domain management tools on offer that drew us to WebFarm, but with plans to launch new SaaS (software as a service) products in the future and the increased complexity of services we realised our needs were going to surpass the boundaries of our shared hosting service," says Danny Sunkel, Zenago's founder.

One of the most important requirements was

that the host had the resources to reply to issues in a timely fashion. "Quick decisions need to be made for the sake of our clients," says Sunkel.

Another key consideration was the move from a shared to a dedicated hosting solution. Zenago was very clear that what had worked at first was nearing the point of exhaustion. While business was continuing, signs of strain on shared hosting were appearing and it became clear that this type of solution was no longer appropriate. Zenago needed more disk space, bandwidth, CPU processing, memory and additional features and most importantly, control. WebFarm presented the option of a dedicated hosting solution, offering complete use of the server's resources, thus guaranteeing improved performance for client's websites, something that appealed enormously to Zenago.

Increased security had also taken greater importance for Zenago. Clients' websites now contain mission critical data, carrying out transactions and collecting credit card details.

These all required dedicated hosting. Zenago needed to eliminate risks associated with loss of data due to power down-time or security issues.

The results

The Zenago hosting solution is within the data centre owned by WebFarm's parent company, ICONZ, which means access to unlimited national traffic, scalable solutions and redundant internet connectivity via multiple providers. This ensures Zenago receives uninterrupted and continued access to data on its servers.

As customers reach this level of hosting, the benefits of being with a hosting provider that has its own data centre become obvious. Zenago did weigh up the option of hosting equipment at its own premises, but once the cost of investing in its own infrastructure was investigated, along with the additional IT support required to maintain an in-house data centre, the option of installing its own equipment in a purpose-built first class facility such as the ICONZ Data Centre

quickly became the preferred solution.

Zenago is delighted with the outcomes of the move to WebFarm. The dedicated hosting solution was designed to enable Zenago to centralize the management and access to its servers. WebFarm's ability to respond to queries quickly and efficiently has been a key factor in the continued relationship with the benefits of faster turnaround times flowing directly through to Zenago's clients.

Sunkel's advice to businesses? "Your business needs to be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of your customers. This also applies to your hosting provider. Choose a host on the basis that it can grow with you. This means a hosting company that has its own or hosts its servers within a reputable data centre facility. We found this in the ICONZ group."

For more information, visit our website: www.iconz.co.nz or call 0800 THE NET (0800 843-638)

