

Betros Bros

January 2002

Betros Bros is a privately owned company that has been operating since 1938 as a wholesale and retail fruit and vegetable merchants. It operates one supermarket style store and one traditional fruit and vegetable retail store in Toowoomba and another store in Dalby, plus wholesales to the western part of Queensland. Betros Bros employs around 160 staff.

We talked to Kerry Betros, managing director at its head office in Annand St, Toowoomba, QLD.

Who are your customers?

They are mainly local residents purchasing our products in our retail stores. We also wholesale to hospitals, schools, shops, restaurants etc.

Do you have an established customer base?

Yes.

Are you trying to attract new customers?

Yes.

Who are your competitors?

This is a very competitive field and there are many competitors.

How have you been successful?

We have developed a good reputation over many years providing a good quality service

How do you use digital technology in your business?

All of the administration takes place in our offices attached to our central warehouse in Annand St. Toowoomba. We have 8 computers networked at our head office using Windows95 and Microsoft Works. They are networked using a server. Only three of the networked computers are able to connect to the Internet via a 56k modem on the server. We make very limited use of mobile telephones in our business activities.

The business uses Attache for general accounting including accounts payable and receivable. We use on-line banking mainly for paying suppliers and we do receive some on-line payments from our customers. We use SYBIZ for our payroll and are very happy with its performance.

We only make limited use of the Internet in our business. We have a Web page facility from the supplier of our hardware but we have never taken advantage of it. Most business communication to customers is via telephone or fax. We fax a newsletter to our customers. Very few wholesale customers use e-mail for communication with us. Most e-mail use is with our accountant, bank and other professionals.

Our retail outlets use POS and bar code scanners linked to their PC registers running the TEC POS system

Where did you go for advice?

We have been dealing with Downes Office Equipment of Toowoomba for many decades. They usually supply us with both our hardware, software and setup our network and equipment for us.

Were you happy with the work and help given?

Yes.

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What mistakes did you make that you wish you hadn't?

Our Attache accounting package is good but it is inadequate for our needs, we needed a more integrated accounting package.

What are you planning to do next?

We are in the process of getting a contractor in Brisbane to modify an off-the-shelf accounting package for our specific requirements. The contractor is working with our CPA (external accountant) to ensure it satisfies our business requirements. We are prompted to do this to facilitate the production of our BAS statement for the ATO.

We realise that the digital revolution is at our doorstep but we intend waiting for the right time for us before we undertake major technological developments. Only a very small percentage of our customers are using the Internet as the mainstay of their business operations so we need to wait until this situation with our customers develops further before we make a major launch onto the Internet.