

Chunky Move

www.chunkymove.com

November 2003

Interview with Christina Soong on using the Internet to conduct e-business

1. The business

Chunky Move was founded in 1995, to be Victoria's flagship contemporary dance company. It is based in Melbourne, at a contemporary arts centre that houses its studios and office space. It presents works at its home base, and at other venues throughout Australia. The company has also toured extensively throughout the world.

Chunky Move supports Australian dancers and choreographers through a program of daily classes, workshops and events held in the company's studios, and through the support of independent Victorian choreographers producing and presenting their own work.

2. The idea

The current website was launched in March 2003. An earlier site, largely text-based, was failing to meet the needs of the company. A review of online requirements was carried out in late 2002, and it was decided that the website would best serve the company as a comprehensive information source.

The site contains an events calendar with information on current performances and performance history. Extensive information is provided on staff, classes, workshops and studio hire, with downloadable PDFs of all schedules. An online shop facility sells Chunky Move products. However, the company does not see e-commerce as its primary function. The site does not include an online booking facility, but patrons are directed to the appropriate booking agency for performances at various venues.

The website is promoted through all of the company's print materials—flyers, program schedules and press releases.

Maintenance is carried out by Marketing and Development Manager, Christina Soong, who spends some time every day—about half a day per week in all—identifying update information, which is put up on the site by a technical person. Major changes will be handled by Icon Inc, the site hosts.

3. The e-business

The e-commerce function of the site is the Shop, through which customers can order and pay for T-shirts, CDROMs and videos of Chunky Move activities.

By clicking on the **Shop** icon users are taken to another window which contains a list of items for sale. A **More info** button provides an illustration of each item, with details of sizes and costs. The user then selects the number of items and then clicks on **Continue to checkout**, provides personal information, and enters the payment section, via a secure connection. The company also hires out its studios, full specifications of which are available via downloadable PDFs. Studios are booked and paid for using traditional procedures.

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The site includes an online registration form for a mailing list. This enables the company to keep its patrons informed on all aspects of its business.

A Noticeboard facility allows other organisations to advertise their activities through the Chunky Move site.

4. The challenges

The main challenge for Chunky Move in planning its website was to develop a coherent menu system—finding appropriate names for aspects of the company's operations that would be clearly understood by the users. This required a significant shift in perception on the part of the staff, to view all aspects of the company's operation as outsiders would see them, to ensure that site navigation would be clear and logical.

5. The results

The site provides a great deal of information, and Christina is proud of the fact that there are few questions about the company that are not answered on the website. This has been particularly important in responding to the large number of enquiries from students doing projects. Downloadable PDFs, containing information on class and workshop schedules and studio specifications are particularly useful.

There is now much less mailing out of information, which has saved time for staff and resulted in a more efficient operation.

6. The future

This is a new site, and it is too early to say what might emerge over time. Chunky Move is very happy with its website, and no specific changes are being considered at present. The company is happy to wait and watch the public reaction to the changes that have recently been introduced.

7. The advice

Christina's advice is 'do your research'. She believes that it is essential to make sure that you know why you are building a website and what you want it to do for you. You need to ensure that the site you build will complement the activities of your organisation. Wide consultation is important during the planning stages, so that many perspectives are gathered, which all help to shape the purpose of the site, its features and functions.

She also stresses that a 'successful' site is very much about finding the right company to work with when planning, designing and delivering the site. Icon Inc helped them to refine their ideas, sort out the structure and come up with a great design.