



# Case Study

## Regal Craft Cards

*"Regal Craft Cards online" has taken a Tasmanian business to the world*

### **Regal Craft Cards**

Has been selling quality craft cards, quilling paper and other accessories for making gift cards for many years.

The business started more than 20 years ago when Richard Bracey, the Managing Director, helped an elderly lady pursue her hobby of creating home-made greeting cards. Regal Craft Cards now has more than 1,000 styles of cards available for enthusiasts. Richard believes this is the largest range available in the world.

The business is based in Launceston but sells its craft products throughout the world using online ordering and a mail-order catalogue.

Regal Craft Cards has taken advantage of the rapid changes in technology to grow its business. After many years operating out of its premises in Launceston and supplying the local Tasmanian market, it launched a mail-order marketing system. This enabled the business to expand its reach mainly to the rest of Australia and New Zealand.

That system worked very well. Taking it onto the Internet seemed like a natural extension for gaining access to the world. Regal Craft Cards began its move into electronic commerce very simply – designing and publishing its own website completely in-house.

To realise its new electronic commerce plans, the company recognised it needed professional help and external financial assistance to develop the software and create an infrastructure that would transform the way the business was run.

The Tasmanian Electronic Commerce Centre Pty Ltd provided support towards the cost of this development because it saw that this traditional

Tasmanian business could provide an example of how electronic commerce could be used to lead the way in a marketplace rather than being left behind.

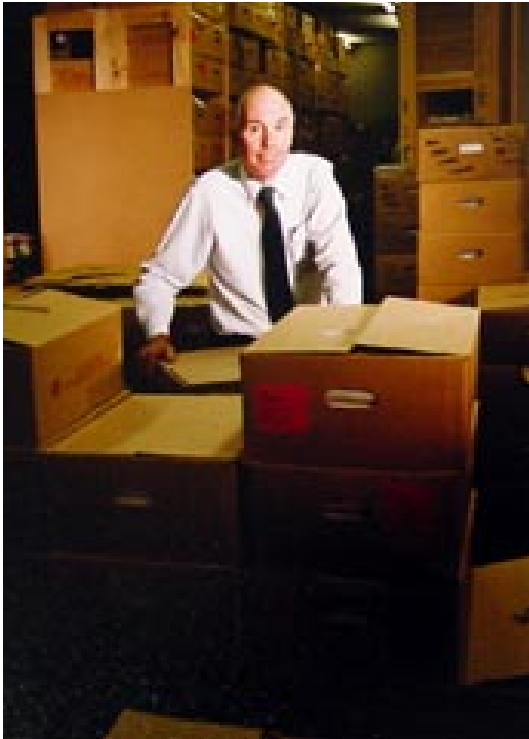
Regal Craft Cards online was launched in February 2000 and produced an instant return and an immediate impact on the way the business operated.

### **Benefits to customers**

Customers of Regal Craft Cards online have a number of advantages over those who use the company's conventional mail-order system.

They no longer have to wait for catalogues to arrive in their post boxes after ordering them either by phone, by fax or through the mail. Regal Craft Cards has an up-to-date catalogue on its website, which customers can access instantly whenever they want from all parts of the globe. They can see on screen exactly what they can purchase from the company.





Once they have made their selections and registered their details, they can submit their orders quickly, accurately and conveniently using the electronic order form at the website. They can see how much their orders will cost in the currencies of the countries from which they place their orders. Using the website also means that customers never run out of order forms and will be informed of new products as they become available.

In addition, customers can check the progress of their orders and view their previous orders quickly and efficiently using their own customer logins. Regal Craft Cards keeps a complete record system for them, removing the need for them to keep their own records.

Customers can use their credit cards without risk. The company's webserver contains Thawte® SSL certificates, allowing the company to communicate securely with its customers. These certificates make eavesdropping on web traffic just about impossible.

### **Benefits to Regal Craft Cards**

Electronic commerce is helping Regal Craft Cards achieve cost efficiencies and increase its direct sales throughout the world using the Internet. It has opened up potentially lucrative export markets where all orders are paid in advance by credit card, thereby removing cash flow problems. During the first year after the website was launched, the number of visits to the site and the value of the sales each month increased, with a peak of sales in the two months before Christmas. The company sold its products to customers in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Fiji, the USA, Mexico, Singapore, Venezuela, Belgium, Canada, Switzerland, the Arab States, India and Japan.

Regal Craft Cards now also uses the Internet to target other businesses operating in the craft field, searching worldwide for new stock to increase the variety it has to offer. The company can make quick decisions about whether or not to purchase new stock and then contact clients, or potential clients, throughout the world at great speed to let them know about its new ranges of products or what is on "special" in specific months.

Electronic commerce also has helped to improve the way Regal Craft Cards controls its stock. Every item is bar coded and the company now can detect immediately those items that are in vogue at particular times and can re-order them to ensure it meets demand. The new technology has taken the labour out of this process, resulting in cost efficiencies.



### **Local developer**

Tasmanian firm Murchison Productions was given the task of developing an online retail outlet and supply chain management system for the company. The IT professionals developed from the ground up a complete sales, accounts receivable and inventory system. It involved two databases – one holding information for the public website and the other a private website joined by a local area network to the company's PCs.

The private website is not online except when exchanging data with the public site. This includes uploading changes to the information on products and details of how customers' orders are progressing and downloading customers' credit card and order details.

The website supports a shopping cart approach for online ordering; private customer information, including sales histories and status of orders; a facility for Regal Craft Cards to add to and organise its product catalogue; and an automatic freight cost calculator.

The private website takes the orders, prints the invoices, manages the stock inventory, provides data on sales and manages the debtor accounts.

Murchison Productions placed a lot of emphasis on the visual design and physical operation of Regal Craft Cards online. The site needed to handle a lot of information at one time but the overall appearance needed to be uncluttered.

The navigation within the site needed to be both intuitive and consistent throughout to make it easy for customers. Small "teasers" on the home page were introduced to entice customers to explore the site.

The Tasmanian Electronic Commerce Centre Pty Ltd also helped develop the project. Its project funding methodology meant that it worked with Regal Craft Cards and Murchison Productions to fine tune the project design and ensure an effective outcome.



### **The future**

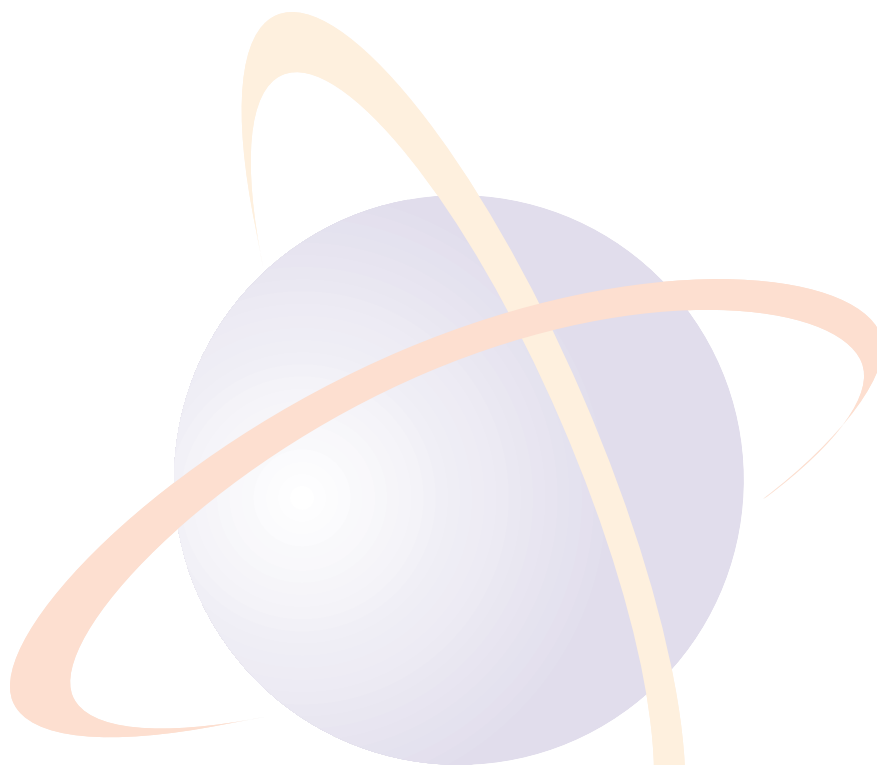
Richard Bracey, the Managing Director of Regal Craft Cards, says the Internet has confirmed that people worldwide are fascinated with creating unique, personalised greeting cards. The number of orders either by mail, telephone or fax is diminishing as customers progressively become more comfortable with the concept of electronic commerce. The orders Regal Craft Cards receives through the website are quicker to process and the completed invoice and picking slips are less susceptible to errors. As a result, Richard believes that the website will have profound benefits for his company in the future. He says that electronic commerce has shown him that the sky is the limit for his business and he has no idea where it will end.



# ***We're showing Tasmanian business the way to benefit from electronic commerce.***

Since 1998 TECC's key role, innovation and unique approach to electronic commerce in Tasmania is helping Australia become a world class leader in the information economy. TECC has developed a range of specific products, including EC Aware, Online Outcomes Seminars and Workshops, EC Business, EC Market and EC Ready, to assist small, medium and large Tasmanian companies benefit from electronic commerce.

**Contact us to discover how your business can benefit from electronic commerce.**



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