



Client: Strike
 Product: Strike GPS
 Date: 23 July 2010
 Publication: The Sydney Morning Herald
 Circulation: 340,026
 Readership: 1,014,000

The Sydney Morning Herald

SPECIAL REPORT

DriveLife 33



Right location

We put GPS units to the test on a rugged cross-country bike trip.

Most well-equipped upper-end cars are now fitted with satellite navigation but on two wheels, only Honda's Gold Wing (see page 28) can boast a truly integrated solution.

Some other brands offer bar-mounted accessory items that do a reasonable job but most require the use of a Bluetooth headset in order to receive turn-by-turn instructions.

The aftermarket industry is also offering products to fill that niche for the motorcyclist who is averse to dead-tree maps.

TomTom's second generation Rider product is perhaps the most well-known GPS for motorcyclists and is a well-proven product. We subjected the TomTom Rider V2 to the ultimate torture test during a ride around Australia. The first 4500 kilometres of the 16,000 kilometre journey were marked by constant rain that varied from light drizzle to downpours of biblical proportions. The TomTom survived the water test perfectly.

The only temporary misfire came in constant 40-plus degree temperatures in Australia's north west. The Rider V2 decided that enough was enough, invoked union heat policy and refused to operate until the mercury dipped a few hours later. We can't blame it; we nearly joined it in sympathy.



The battery life of the TomTom

Rider is excellent. It can be wired into the electrical system of the motorcycle but we managed to ride from Phillip Island to NSW's Hunter Valley on battery reserves alone. We simply switched the unit off when on the long stretches where no instructions would be needed. The GPS will run for more than five hours of continuous use on battery.

The Rider V2 comes with all fitting hardware and the best Bluetooth headset in the business, the Cardio Scala Rider.

New on the market is serious contender, the Strike Genius. Retailing for \$499, the Strike also includes mounting hardware (albeit cruder than the TomTom mounts), and Sersis Australia/NZ mapping.

Strike scores bonus points by including a windscreen mount and 12-volt adapter for car use as standard, while TomTom's car kit is a \$135 option.

Strike is working with Hema Maps to add off-road mapping data to the



Strike distance ... TomTom's Rider faces competition from the Strike Genius.

Genius and is expected to have that later in the year. When implemented, it will be a significant feather in Strike's cap as we are unaware of off-road routes on the TomTom unit. The Strike can also record the rider's history and transfer the data to Google Earth for revisiting the adventure later on a PC.

Strike's route-planning interface is more intuitive than the Rider and the next-turn window in the corner of the display is a welcome feature. The TomTom is easier to use with gloved hands, however and can also hook up to your mobile phone via Bluetooth. The Strike Genius goes without Bluetooth and instead relies

on FM radio to communicate voice-guidance prompts via a supplied earphone headset. Mosaic can be loaded on the Strike Genius, which can act as a media server to deliver tunes to your helmet. The unit can also be optioned with a top-of-the-line Cardio Scala Rider Q2 Bluetooth headset, which adds mobile phone pairing capability for a total package price of \$725.

There is little to separate the \$799 TomTom Rider and Strike Genius. If you already have a Bluetooth headset fitted to your helmet, then the \$499 Strike Genius offers the best value, especially when you consider the off-road mapping capability.

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ANZ, NAB boost mortgage portfolios at expense of Westpac, CBA

Big two lose loan grip

George Lekakis

THE 18-month struggle to top the Australian mortgage market enjoyed by Westpac and Commonwealth Bank is becoming an event not an ANZ loan to boost lending.

Figures from the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority show loans increased, lending to loan-buyers by \$6.5 billion in February.

Westpac and its St George subsidiary accounted for 30 per cent, or \$2.62 billion, of the increase.

CBA and its Bankwest arm generated \$2.21 billion in new business.

Most second-line banks are still

struggling to compete with their bigger rivals, with AMP Bank suffering a net contraction during the month.

The exception was Banker and Adelaide Bank which increased loans lending by \$20 million.

While Westpac and CBA together accounted for 50 per cent of the market growth during the month, their combined dominance has fallen from the 70 per cent share they had last year.

The APRA figures show that ANZ Bank now has the fastest growing loan lending among the major banks in February, expanding its mortgage business by \$1.54 billion.

National Australia Bank also increased its market share, boosting its loans lending by \$1.31 billion.

The results should have been better for ANZ and NAB, both of which have been plagued by processing delays with their mortgage systems.

NAB, which has the cheapest variable rate of the major, encountered technical problems late in January which meant it could not process loan approvals submitted by some mortgage brokers.

Another issue of concern for NAB was its relatively poor performance in raising consumer deposits in February, expanding its mortgage business by only \$200 million - less than the three other major banks and even Bank of Queensland, which was up \$508 million.

As a price leader in several loan deposit and online account categories, NAB should be at least mirroring the growth of its major rivals.

And the bank's aggressive move in lower fees as a result of account research has not brought market share gains.

Despite some merrit at Bankwest, CBA increased retail deposits by \$840 million, followed by Westpac (\$577 million) and ANZ (\$506 million).

But the big loser during the month was BSW. BSW, which suffered a

\$475 million decline in its deposits business, BSW's deposit base shrank by \$7.43 billion at the end of January and shrank by \$10.98 billion.

Other banks in loss general to retail deposits included AMP Bank (down \$38 million) and Rabobank (down \$1 million).

All of the major banks are competing furiously for internet account customers and this has forced BSW to lift its rate to a market-leading 5.85 per cent.

NAB's 12-month term is also offering 5.85 per cent, followed by Westpac (5.5 per cent), ANZ (4.25 per cent) and CBA (4 per cent).



PERFECT TOUCH: Simon Coulter and Greg Rostrom believe their touch screen products can take on the world. Picture: Nathan Richter

All systems go for Handii giant killers

Thomas Bignall

GREG Rostrom threw I back away from a challenge.

This month his Brisbane-based company launches a range of touch-screen PCs just as computer giant Apple rolls out its own much-touted iPad tablet device.

"We have spent almost \$1 million on development in the past two years," he said.

"There is a long way to go, but we are confident that we are bringing very credible products to the marketplace."

Mr Rostrom and friend Terry Davies came up with the idea to

establish Handii Computers in 2008, during a casual discussion about other business ventures.

It began in a home office in the Brisbane suburb of Clayfield, with Mr Rostrom making prototype PCs from standard components.

"We have been developing prototypes for various models for two years," he said.

"Our latest releases are a product of all of this research and technical development, combining the most up-to-date, off-the-shelf components from Intel and other component manufacturers."

The tablets are manufactured in Shenzhen, China.

"We have employed a further company in Shenzhen as our product manager and product development team," Mr Rostrom said.

The two flagship products, the Gold and Grey tablet touch-screen computers, were officially released at the Singapore IT Show last month, where the response "exceeded our expectations. The product sold fast."

The Gold and Grey tablets, priced from \$899 and \$695 respectively, are sold directly through Handii's website and the company is in talks with major retailers.

Handii ambitiously hopes to sell 150,000 units in the first year.

Handii Computers general manager Simon Coulter said the iPad was essentially a multimedia device while the Gold, in particular, was an IT-in-one PC tablet.

"While we were in Singapore, an online tech channel called Razor TV coined the name 'iPad killer' to describe our Gold," he said.

"We were obviously pretty happy about that."

For Mr Rostrom it's a change of pace from his day job as managing partner of Brisbane law firm Rostrom Corbett.

"It is a challenge, but Handii is a passion and satisfies our intrinsic needs as well," he said.

Markets head to Easter on a high



DRIVING FORCE: Japanese car sales rose in the US.

ASIAN shares rallied yesterday after upbeat US manufacturing data and management figures boosted hopes for a sustainable global economic recovery.

But trade was light, with many markets, including Australia, closed for the Good Friday holiday.

Japan's Nikkei index hit an 18-month peak for the fourth straight day, getting a boost from a rise in tech shares and car makers such as Honda and Toyota following a jump in US sales in March. The Nikkei closed up 41.99 points at 11,265.09.

Templated incentives fueled a 24.3 per cent jump in US car sales in March after Toyota set a price war as it wooed customers spooked by a series of mass recalls.

Total industry sales rose to a seasonally adjusted annualised rate of 1178 million units from 922 million units in March 2009 and 10.38 million units in February.

Locally on Thursday, the S&P/ASX 200 rose 52.2 points to 4927.7.

On Wall Street overnight on Thursday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 70.44 points to 10,927.07.

"The bulls were 'led by a plethora of upbeat manufacturing reports around the globe," which bolstered the eight-night streak of optimism for the US S&P Manufacturing Index.

The Institute for Supply Management said its monthly survey of manufacturing managers showed a broad improvement, with the strongest growth since July 2008. Significant also found support in official data showing initial claims for US jobless insurance benefits fell last week to 470,000, the lowest level this year.

In Australia, mixed economic data on Thursday left the chance of a rise in official rates next week balanced on a knife-edge, economists said.

Figures released on Thursday revealed inflation was stronger than expected and consumer imports were also above expectations while manufacturing growth has eased.

Client: Handii
 Product: Handii Tablet PC
 Date: 3 April 2010
 Publication: The Courier Mail
 Circulation: 300, 830
 Readership: 817,000





Product: Scala Rider Bluetooth Kit
 Client: Strike
 Date: 31 October 2009
 Publication Daily Telegraph
 Circulation: 327,538
 Readership: 860, 000

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yourgear



Talk to me

MOTORBIKE accessories company **Cardo** is keeping bikers in touch with each other. Its Bluetooth Scala Rider Q2 Multiset includes two enhanced wireless headsets for hands-free and bike-to-bike communication effective at up to 500m. The headsets come pre-paired so riders can instantly begin communicating. An MP3 jack is included in both headsets, which allow riders to connect an MP3 player. Incoming intercom messages and phone calls will override the music.
Price: \$255 (single), \$440 (two units)
Where: Bike, electronics and telco stores



Rapid recovery

BUSHRANGER has introduced a snatch strap to its recovery gear product line-up aimed at the SUV market. It is 5m long, 60mm wide, unstretched and has a 20 per cent stretch factor.
Price: \$75
Where: 4WD and automotive stores



Show me the way

NOKIA has upgraded the satellite navigation on its 6710 Navigator mobile phone to include voice-guided navigation. Features include real time traffic information and 3D landmarks.
Price: \$629 or various phone plans
Where: Phone stores

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Back in 1996, Andrew Cooper hadn't even logged onto this thing called the World Wide Web but he could already see the potential of a shopping environment that required no physical stores. Today, he is one of Australia's leading players in e-commerce as the CEO of Hotshad, an e-business solutions company and dStore, Australia's largest online retailer. >>



Client: dstore
Date: October 2009
Publication: M2 Magazine

SUCCESS

Where did it all start? Where did the idea for Hotshad come from?
My brother and I were talking about getting into business together. He was basically a kid with a lot of software skills and I had been reading about this thing called e-commerce in 1996, so we just decided to get into that side of things. I'd love to be able to say that it was some sort of great visionary plan but really, it was just born out of the desire of two brothers to get into business together.

So no big plan as to where things were going?
Well, I was in retail at the time. I had some spare stocks, so I guess I had some appreciation of the potential of online commerce. There was a lot of talk about the delivery of digital content via the internet, so we could see there was some potential. Early that stage, I hadn't even logged onto the internet. I was really just interested in getting into business with my brother. I knew he was the smart one, so I left it to him to steer the initial direction.

Back then, did you have any concept that you would be where you are now?

Early on in things, you go in with assumptions but a lot of those assumptions have been proven correct - that there were efficiencies that can be gained without having retail shopfronts and there are consumers out there who have embraced online shopping. So it kind of started gaining momentum, we really bought into the whole thing. And then dStore popped up after we started as a really prominent online retailer went broke and we've given the opportunity to buy it. That's when we brought, today how we have to get serious.

You're really putting your money where your mouth is by this stage.
Well, that's exactly what happened. What we first started up, things were funded basically by our pocket money, time and resources. But when we bought dStore, that's when the mortgages came out. We bought it on September 10, 2001 and the next day, that tragedy in the United States happened. Even 24 hours after that event, they were talking about a global meltdown. I honestly thought we had done our due diligence but in the end, it was a good decision. That was eight years ago. It seems like a lifetime ago now.

Back then, did people think that you were mad?
It was interesting, dStore was such a prominent business back then. They spent \$30 million and about half of that was on marketing, and then it went broke. Their idea was to just get big and work out any efficiencies later. Gradually, all of the big companies looking at buying it dropped out because they had no way of applying a more efficient model. It was really only guys like us who were smaller and by necessity, operationally efficient, that could have bought it and turned it around.

When dStore first came out, it spent millions on marketing, do you think that much of this marketing was wasted?
There's no doubt, I think it was wasted in terms of consumer but what it did do, was establish a brand and mark them, a part of their market was also the investment community, and the investment community got really excited about brands in the online area. So their strategy was to grow as quickly as they possibly could and raise as much money as they possibly could to eventually do a float. And I guess while money was wasted and they didn't convert as many consumers and shoppers as they would have hoped, they did do that brand. There was a bit of a jargon floating around at the time about it being a bit of a land grab. There was this whole idea of first mover advantage and the thought that there was only going to be one winner in online retail and you had to stake out your claim pretty quickly. And I guess those sorts of concepts have proven to be premature. You look at the United States, where Amazon is the clear, dominant online retailer, there are still many, many online retailers who have proven to be very successful, even making Amazon's terms of return on investment. So there's plenty of room for lots of players. We'd just like to be one of the main ones.

What's the rate of conversion to online retail?
We've served 500,000 Australian consumers, and around 100,000 international customers, so that's a million Australian customers just through us in a reasonable percentage of the Australian population that have shopped with just us online. We're growing at 20 to 35 percent per annum, some of our peers are growing at that rate and some of the smaller ones are growing even faster than that. So the market is definitely growing and it's hot growth. But here in Australia, we're really are ten years behind the US, we are probably a third of the penetration compared with them. In fact, we have 50 much further to go compared with most Western markets.

Globally, the economy has had its ups and downs, have you been affected by that at all?
I don't think the downturn was anywhere near as significant as what we anticipated. All of the fiscal handouts that went to consumers will be starting to work their way out of the system now, so it will be interesting to see how this Christmas goes. I'd expect that it would be fairly flat compared with last Christmas. This thing about online retail is that it has never been through a recession before, so I think it's a learning curve for most of us. There are arguments that you can't count on that it's good for online retail, and there are arguments that you can't count on that it's bad.

You're also president of the Brisbane arm of the global Entrepreneurs' Organisation, which you've been a member of for the last eight years. What have you gotten from that?
Sometimes being a business owner or an entrepreneur can be a bit of a lonely existence but the organisation creates a great environment where people with similar challenges can gather and work through the issues of the day. If there are issues that I am having, there's a good chance that someone else has had those issues in the past and can share their experience with me, which can learn and grow from.

Do you think it takes a certain type of person to be an entrepreneur?
I think it does but there are still all sorts of personality types and all sorts of ways that people attack the same sorts of challenges. In my experience, there is a certain type of possessing personality that takes a contrary view to what everyone else does. If you are going to start a business, you have to believe, almost by implication, that you can do it better than someone else—and that's not the thinking that most people have. Another thing is that if I look, at myself, I wouldn't be a good employee. In fact, I would be a shocking employee because I get bored really. Owning your own business can be a challenging environment but I think, at the same time, a lot of entrepreneurs need that. For more successful business owners, I think it's almost the business is a game and making money is just purely keeping score.

For more successful business owners, I think it's almost like business is a game and making money is just purely keeping score.

Is dStore keeping you excited? Are you looking to move onto the next thing yet?
I'm still very energized by it because it is still so early in the growth cycle of the industry but I think as you get more experience, and the owner is a by-product now, you learn that the day you start a business is the day you should be working on making yourself redundant. At the end of the day, a successful business should function successfully on its own.

Should the government be doing more to support growing businesses or should they just keep out of it?
My personal view is that we should just keep things simple. Every time there are changes to the industrial relations law, it provides a layer of complexity, a layer of administrative burden that is just pure waste. Every time a new raft of administration comes out, it creates burden, it creates waste and at the end of the day, that inefficiency that tests into the performance of the country.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?
I remember my dad saying to me a lot that it's something that every successful person is persistence. And that's something I really look to heart. Knock backs should only be treated as temporary learning events. If you struggle with something, you've got to take on board what you learnt from that and you've got to keep going.

www.touchpointmarketing.com.au



Client: dstore

Date: May 2009

Publication: Money Magazine

BIG SAVINGS ONLINE DEALS

STORY MARIA BEKIARIS

Save on the web

Where can you save \$50 on a luxury face cream or buy a dozen bottles of wine at a \$100 discount to the recommended retail price? The internet – that's where.

THE SAVINGS YOU CAN make by shopping online are huge. And let's face it, whether you're doing it tough or are sitting pretty, saving money is never a bad thing. But finding the bargains can be time-consuming, so the even better news is that Money has done the hard work for you. We've tracked down some of the best shopping sites.

Why are many online stores cheaper than their bricks and mortar counterparts? Well, they don't have to pay high rents for premium locations, and can often buy in bulk.

And you can save time as well as money, says Andrew Cooper, chief executive officer of online department store Dstore. Online shopping can be quick and convenient and you'll even use less petrol.

If you've hesitated about going shopping online, you may be surprised to learn that it has taken off to the extent that 89% of Australian internet users use this facility, according to Nielsen's Online Consumer Report.

A report by Choice in late 2007 did find that buying online isn't always cheaper than in-store, but substantial savings can be made if you're a savvy shopper.

The key is to make sure you really are getting a good deal online – don't simply assume

that's the case. Do your research to make sure the discounts are real – both online and in-store. Shopping comparison sites can help you and are definitely a good starting point. They list the highest and lowest prices from a range of retailers.

You can usually either enter the name of the product you're interested in and see what results pop up, or click through product categories. Comparison sites worth looking at include www.getprice.com.au, www.mysopping.com.au and www.shopferret.com.au. Keep in mind they may not include all possible retailers, generally listing those that pay them a fee to be linked to the site.

The other important element in becoming a savvy shopper is to make sure you understand all the costs involved. One of the biggies will usually be the cost of postage.

Choice's survey found that when a product was more expensive online, it was often due to the cost of delivery. Sometimes it's worthwhile buying several items because postage won't be much more than for a single item. First do the sums.

You may also be up for insurance costs and, if you buy at some auctions, a buyer's premium. Take all the costs into account before making a purchase. And ask how long delivery usually takes, suggests Cooper from Dstore.

If you're in a hurry, paying a little extra may get you express post.

If you do decide to go ahead and buy something online, it's important to know who you're dealing with – are they reputable? "The reputation of the merchant is key," says Cooper.

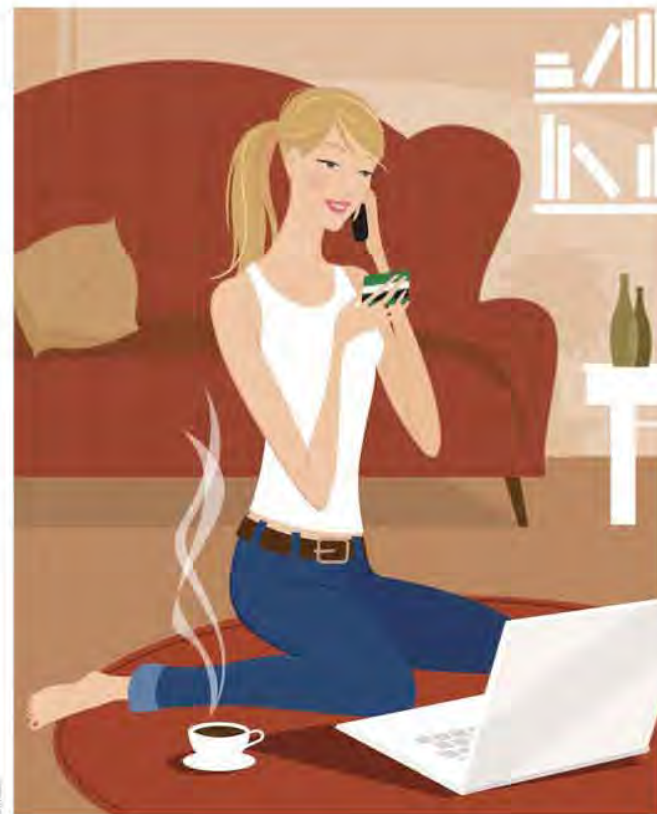
Cameron Poelman, CEO of online auction house GraysOnline, agrees. "Know the company you are dealing with," he says. "Check out the 'about us' section. Look for a phone number and address. Will you be able to contact them if things go wrong?"

Don't be turned off immediately, though, if there is no phone number listed. "You can also check a local business's details by looking them up in the phone book and contacting them directly," says the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

You should also look for an ABN or ACN number, which you can usually verify through www.callie.business.gov.au.

Make sure you find out about the return policy, says Poelman. "Find out what happens if there is a problem," he says. As a general rule, if it's an Australian site you should be covered by a "stagnatory warranty." This basically means you will be entitled to a refund if the item is damaged or faulty or does not match the sample or description provided.

If you've changed your mind or bought





Client: dStore
Date: July – August 2009
Publication: Wealth Creator

PROFILES

dotcom boom 2.0 still to come

dStore.com.au managing director **Andrew Cooper** explains why the best of the internet is still to come for retail operations

I left university and it took me a couple of years to work out that I wasn't a very good employee. I got frustrated with the way the businesses operated and how they treated people, so I thought the best thing for me to do would be to strike out on my own. Of course when you do that you realise that running a business is not as easy as you thought it was, so you can appreciate the challenges that are faced by business owners. I think I have a much greater appreciation now of what it was like for those people I was working for.

I was always entrepreneurial, but I don't recall in my younger days knowing the difference between someone who worked for a living and someone who owned a business and employs people. It is only now I can see the stark difference between the two. I come from a family that has always owned businesses or farming, so it was just assumed that you would go into business. It was never really a stark choice for me, it was just a natural progression into being a business owner. It surprises me that most people don't think like that. It surprises me that a lot of people would consider spending their entire life working for someone else.

I don't have any business heroes, but I do take the best ideas from a collection of business thought leaders. I read a lot of business books and people related titles learning how to motivate people. I have learnt how to appeal to people's sense of self-worth so that they come to work excited

rather than coming begrudgingly. When you come out of university you don't realise that you haven't been taught everything you need to know about management. As you spend a bit of time employing people you realise that there is so much more to know about motivating staff and giving people a sense of achievement and satisfaction out of the major thing they do in their lives. It disappoints me that you don't learn any of that at university.

I think there are certain things a successful business leader needs to have. First and foremost you need to have empathy for your customers and the people on your team. What you observe is that there is no single right way to run a business. But there is a way you can run a business where everyone involved in it, from customers to employees to shareholders to managers, can get something out of the business rather than running it like the proverbial tyrant who in the end becomes the major beneficiary of the business while the others get chewed up and spat out along the way.

My general observation is that most people that I know in business seek to run a business that is good for all the participants in it and the companies that run the longest tend to operate like that.

With dStore we had to bring a reality to the business that wasn't there. It had been born out of a unique time in the dotcom boom and when that ended the trajectory of the business needed to change rapidly. We were in a position to do that.

Even though it has the same name, dStore was quickly changed into an entirely different business. From the customers' point of view they wouldn't have detected a lot of difference, but in the back office there were massive changes. It just needed to happen – businesses do need to make money, they do need to adhere to some sort of money-making model where all the participants benefit. Shareholders do need to make a return otherwise the business will eventually fail. We applied those principles from the moment we took over the business, which forced radical change on the business.

The original dotcom boom expectations were not unrealistic, it was just the timeframe that they were meant to achieve them were unrealistic. We are now close to a decade later and there have now been some enormous successes around the globe. In some ways those successes have wildly outstripped even the most optimistic expectations back in the boom days. Just think of companies like Google where you have seen a giant shift in the way business operates because of what one company has been able to achieve.

For online retailers like dStore the big thing that we didn't realise back in the boom was that it takes a long time for customers' habits to change. It takes almost a generation or two for people to break the habits that have taken several generations to build up. But as those new generations build up the boom will come and I would expect that an increasing

AT A GLANCE

Name: Andrew Cooper
Position: dStore.com.au managing director
Age: 42
Turnover: \$10 million annually
Growth: 25% annually "for some years now"
Predictions: 10% growth in 2009



that got broke, but the ones that survive and find their niche have the potential to really grow rapidly.

In the short term we are in a hunker-down mentality, in that we are not doing anything too outrageous in terms of our marketing. We are making sure that we will survive any short term jitters the economy may suffer. But in the longer-term the future is incredibly exciting. There is the opportunity to not only grow organically but also make acquisitions among our peers.

There are lots of challenges. We have had a high growth mentality, but these last

six months – and I suspect the next six months – have been a slow-growth period. One of the challenges is to adapt to that – the learn is used to the excitement of rapid customer acquisition and rapid growth and pulling that back has needed a mindset change for our team.

The other main challenge is just to maintain profitability. Consumers are expecting better prices and the challenge for us is how to deliver those while maintaining our margins and not compromising the strengths of the business. **WM**



Client: Handii

Date: June 2010

Publication: Virgin Blue Voyeur Magazine

KIA

travel tech



SIZE MATTERS

Check out the next (small) big things to rival lugging around unwieldy gadgets on your next trip.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JONAS ANDERSSON

1. The 12.5 megapixel Nikon D3000 digital SLR camera, featuring a new all-weather LCD screen, 19 automatic scene modes and Nikon's D-Movie function, is a versatile travel companion - \$1,179 (body only), \$1,399 (body with 18-55mm VR lens kit). 2. The sleek Sony Ericsson XPERIA X10 mobile phone's unique feature is face recognition, which means it automatically logs and files photos of your friends - \$1,029. 3. With its 10.2-inch touch screen the Handii Go10 tablet PC, now built logging around your laptop - \$895. 4. The Garmin mini 1000 GPS is more than a mere navigator, providing drivers with its various online information, such as Google local search, real-time traffic, weather and fuel prices - \$599. Stockists on page 162.

JUNE 2010



Client: Strike
Date: October 2009
Publication: InCar Entertainment



Parrot MK9200 hands-free Bluetooth kit with iPod control

www.strike.com.au | 07 3036 6227

In-car AV tech control at your fingertips

French company Parrot has steadily and justifiably built a reputation as a leader in the evergrowing Bluetooth arena. Its large range of products span all levels of complexity, from simple all-in-one kits to sophisticated Bluetooth/AV system controllers with a myriad of features. The company is even expanding its arsenal to include a high-tech stereo head unit, and announces some rather beautiful French 'Voicem' products available in Australia by special order.

We'll be looking at the top-of-the-line Parrot MK9200 hands-free Bluetooth kit, which is distributed in Australia via the Strike Group, and retails at Telstra shops and selected retail stores.

PARROT PAIRING

The MK9200 kit consists of several hardware components that need to be installed by a

professional. First is a small 'bluebox' which is installed out of site somewhere within the vehicle's engine bay. Interfaces with the existing in-car stereo to allow audio muting (can be boot-strap via ISO connection) or as a line-in to the head-unit's amplifier and some basic EQing with 'Virtual SuperBass' and 'Sound Spatialiser'. The bluebox is also the interface for the included wire connection loom that allows iPod, 3.5mm mini jack/auxiliary and USB connectivity.

Also included is a double USB-connected microphone, a dash or steering wheel mountable wireless controller and a 2.4-inch contrast/brightness adjustable high resolution screen. The kit includes all the necessary brackets and mounts; Parrot covers all bases. The screen bracket allows easy adjustment of angle and tilt for best viewing. The unit is ready to go after installation and ready.



all you need to do to get going is pair your mobile phone via Bluetooth and then look up your regular source of choice, be it the head unit's tuner or CD, or the cable loom your iPod, other MP3 player or SD-USB-based music files. The MK9200 allows full iPod playback and content control and displays your art work.

The remote controller has a simple set of buttons, a central controller for menu and feature navigation/activation, either side of it the phone control buttons and just below the music controls for play/pause and skip/next/previous track. A small trackpad regarding the otherwise very nifty steering wheel controller's while driving and making rapid three-point turn or U-turns, we found we were accidentally bumping the controller's main dial which can lead – as it happens

to us – to locking-off and losing the lock. An improvement would be to have a faster-probe knob that doesn't protrude as much therefore being less likely to be bumped-off.

TALKING PARROT

In using the unit's Bluetooth capabilities, we tried several mobile phone brands and all paired very quickly and without incident. The X200 also transferring contacts lists automatically. Voice dialing came with spotty success. The word recognition issues that plague all Bluetooth units were also in evidence here. We had joy with simple names, but more unusual or longer ones were a little confusing to the X200. As we say, this is something inherent in all voice recognition units. Commonly, the X200 ironically aids for confirmation via speech synthesis before dialing, avoiding the embarrassing wrong number call. Further reassurance is provided by the person's name being displayed on the screen once it appears in the contacts list whether you are making or rejecting the call. A nice touch if your contacts have photos attached to them, the caller's mug shot will be displayed on the screen.

Of course, the unit automatically mutes the music while voice calling and the ensuing conversation is taking place. We found the dual microphone arrangement to be necessary when in the thick of a road-cold purchase as the sound was clear and ambient noise-free. Similarly, the X200 rejects callers cleanly and with plenty of volume, we found we never straggled with audibility or intelligibility no doubt Parrot's lateral noise detection system pays a big part here.

The user interface is also quite pretty with special 'skin' colours available to replace the tyre or to match the car's instrumentation colour scheme. Similarly, you can choose your own wallpaper theme for backgrounds.



YES! | NOISE!

PARROT MK9200

TYPE: Bluetooth kit with iPod control
FEATURES: 2.4-inch high resolution screen, Bluetooth, iPod control, USB/SD card slot
WARRANTY: One-year warranty
PRICE: \$479
CONTACT: Strike Group on 1300 792 084
www.strike.com.au and www.parrot.com

- Works a treat and is well-received
- Bright screen
- Efficient menus and iPod control
- Steering wheel controller can easily be turned
- Voice recognition is still not the most accurate

Touchpoint Marketing



Client: *dstore*
 Date: 17 – 23 June 2009
 Publication: *Brisbane News*
 Circulation: 119,914
 Readership: 246,000

Many major retailers are getting serious about online business although, in Australia, **FEW OF THE MAJOR TRADITIONAL RETAILERS** have done that.

WILL FYHIL BROWN



Brisbane entrepreneur Andrew Cooper wasn't too concerned when his brother got caught computer hacking. In fact, he was excited. "It showed he had talent," Andrew recalls. He soon put his younger sibling, Tim, to work, designing software that eventually led the brothers to establish what has become Australia's largest online department store, *dstore.com.au*.

In the Australian NetGuide Web Awards 2008, *dstore.com.au* won the Best Online Shopping Website Award – not bad for a business that was once a major flop. Set up during the dotcom boom of the late 1990s, *dstore* was valued at \$80m at its zenith and investors included Microsoft, Kerry Packer's ninetennet, Hoyst's boss Peter Ivany and other high fliers. Former New South Wales premier Nick Greiner thought *dstore.com.au* was such a good thing he even resigned from the board of Coles Myer to get involved, becoming chairman of the online retailer.

"It was a classic techboom story," Andrew, 42, recalls as he chat in the small, spartan boardroom at his West End offices. "It was all looking good. Macquarie Bank was engaged to do a float and then it all went pear-shaped. They ran out of cash, it was put into receivership. That's when my brother Tim and I got involved."

Tim Cooper had begun developing software programs for HotShed, a software company the two former Churchie (Anglican Church Grammar School) students had formed in 1998. They had early success providing e-commerce systems to large retailers, including Rebel Sport, Angus & Coote, Blockbuster video and The Perfume Connection.

When they saw the dotcom darling *dstore.com.au* fall on hard times the Cooper boys sensed an opportunity to use the software Tim had developed for their own ends.

"When *dstore* went broke I thought we should have a good look at it," Andrew recalls. "Provided we could get the business for a cheap enough price we thought we could turn it around and make it a success where others had failed."

"Lots of people were considering buying it, including Coles Myer and Woolworths, but they probably thought they wouldn't be able to make it work unless they had some sort of competitive advantage. This is what we had with our software."

"So we bought it in September 2001 and paid around \$600,000, which was certainly a lot less than \$80m. A lot of people did their dough the first time around which was unfortunate but we knew we could make it work."

Eight years later the company, which has remained privately owned, is going well, has more around 500,000 online customers and is recognised as Australia's own answer to *amazon.com*.

Once the challenge of setting up the business was achieved, Tim decided to step back from day-to-day operations, moving on to other software challenges, though he remains involved and is a major shareholder.

Andrew has stuck with it and has become one of a handful of Brisbane online entrepreneurs who are models for success in the industry, like Graeme Wood of *wool.com*, another locally based online success story.

As president of the Brisbane branch of Entrepreneurs' Organisation, which has a

membership of 7000 worldwide, Andrew, a graduate of QUT, is keen to share his experiences. And one thing an entrepreneur needs to be able to do is gauge what is required next.

In the case of *dstore.com.au*, Andrew realised that online shopping was great but, for some, it wasn't enough. So he's on the verge of expanding the business from virtual to



STOCK OPTIONS as a warehouse of *dstore* goods

reality, and will be opening a dozen bricks and mortar stores in Brisbane for customers who like to actually leave the house to do their shopping. These retail outlets, the first of which is due to open in October, will reflect the online experience of shopping at *dstore.com.au* with online kiosks giving access to the full range of products.

"The trend internationally is now multi-channel retailing and a lot of online retailers are expanding and setting up offline presences," Andrew says.

"At the same time, many major retailers are getting serious about online business although, in Australia, few of the major traditional retailers have done that."

This is fine as far as Andrew is concerned, because it means more market share for *dstore.com.au* which now sells around 800,000 products online and has an annual turnover in excess of \$10m.

Being a largely online affair still means he can operate from his hometown, which suits Andrew. He loves Brisbane and lives at Carindale with wife Anna and daughters Sasha, 5, and Isabella, 2.

Life is good, though he complains that the traffic on his drive to West End each morning is getting worse every day. And don't get him started on parking.

"It's OK over here at West End but it's such a hassle if you go into the city to shop," Andrew says. "I went the other day and paid \$40 for parking. If you know what you want it's so much easier to just buy it online." He would say that, wouldn't he?

WWW.DSTORE.COM.AU



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Client: dstore

Date: 12 January 2010

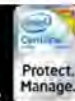
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E-tailer's \$6m plan to establish bricks-and-mortar presence

- Fran Foo
- From: The Australian
- January 12, 2010 12:00AM

E-TAILER dstore.com.au will spend up to \$6 million to establish a physical presence as it opens its first storefront in a few weeks.

dStore had hoped for a Christmas launch but a collapse in talks with local councils in October stymied that plan.

The first store will be located in southeast Queensland and will be between 800sq m and 1000sq m, dStore chief executive Andrew Cooper said.

It aims to open six physical stores by June 2011 at a cost of \$1m each, he added.

Funding to build the first shop will be sourced internally, he said. "Thereafter we will look at other funding means," Mr Cooper said.

"It costs \$1m to set up each store but we're profitable and we reinvest in growing the business. We're looking at around half a dozen stores in the next 18 months."

Mr Cooper said the stores would be located in regional towns with a population of about 10,000 people. "We want to go into areas that are not adequately served by large department stores," he said.

About 800,000 products are sold on dStore's online shop. Unlike eBay, which acts as a "host" to individual sellers and small businesses, dStore sources and sells its wares directly to consumers.

dStore has warehouses in NSW and Queensland that cater to its large array of goods, including electronics, homeware and kitchen appliances.

Mr Cooper believes the market is ripe for the picking as Australia's largest retailers have been asleep at the wheel while their US and European counterparts have been quick to embrace the internet.

"Even if they started seriously doing business on the internet it will take them two or three years to catch up," he said.

The privately held company has 20 full-time employees.

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Client: Strike
 Date: October 2009
 Publication: Virgin Blue Voyeur Magazine

MY SUMMER JOB
→ **SUCCESS**

A LESSON EARNED

DELVE INTO ANY GREAT BUSINESS LEADER'S PAST AND YOU'LL FIND A NOT-SO-SWANKY SUMMER JOB. **CHRIS SHEEDY** MEETS FOUR HIGH-PROFILE EXECUTIVES WHOSE LOW-PAID SCHOOL HOLIDAY JOBS PAVED THEIR PATHS TO SUCCESS.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDREW WATSON; STYLING: TESSIE

ENGLISHERWORLD 66 |

MY SUMMER JOB
SUCCESS ←

A long and successful career is worth much more than the sum of its parts. It's about the lessons along the way, the learnings that come from working with other people, the recognition of the value of a hard day's work and, most important, knowing what it feels like to start at the bottom.

Many of today's finest senior managers are in their current positions not only because of their education but also as a result of their experiences as students of employment. They were all once teenagers, simply hoping to earn some spending money, sinking sullenly stiff to work in the summer heat as their friends happily hopped on their bikes and went to the beach. But every job has its value and, as these four executives look back, they realise they wouldn't have had it any other way.

CHRIS RYAN
 From :: Handyman and surf shop salesperson
 To :: CEO, Strike Group Australia

I spent my school holidays helping my parents maintain a few rental properties that they owned. Every day in summer I'd mow lawns or paint fences with my brothers and sisters for about 50 cents an hour. I was a 12-year-old handyman and I hated it. But my parents led by example — they were right there beside us, mowing and painting. They showed us what it means to have a good work ethic.

As I grew up, I realised that establishing a good work ethic when you're young helps you to steel yourself for tough times when you're older; it taught me how to knuckle down and get a job done, even if I'm not enjoying it. From that perspective it was one of the best things that my parents could have done for me.

When I was 15 years old I was working full time during the school holidays in a surf shop. I went to work while my mates went to the beach, but there were things that I wanted to buy so I was keen for the work. The big learning curve at this job was understanding the customers' needs.

At Christmas, often mothers would come in to buy their teenage sons a bodyboard. I worked out what they needed to hear from me to feel comfortable making a decision. ▶

“Establishing a good work ethic when you're young helps you to steel yourself for tough times when you're older.”

CHRIS RYAN

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