



CASE STUDY - ELAN NURSERY

Helping a busy nursery find new ways to communicate with parents.

Background

Elan Nursery in Haywards Heath was founded in 2006 on the principle of inspiring children to learn through play and discovery. Since then the business has grown organically through word of mouth and referrals and now looks after over 100 children each week. Located right by the station in Haywards Heath, the nursery frequently responds to many requests from prospective customers interested in finding out more about the services.

Brief

Elan approached me for advice on how they could make better use of their current communications framework, and ideas for new ways to use technology to engage with parents. They already had a website with a members area and issued regular newsletters, but found that they needed to upgrade their business processes and IT systems to work with a larger customer base of current and prospective customers.

Approach

An initial consultation was carried out and all key business processes documented, along with an audit of technology best practice in nursery and other service-led businesses. This review revealed several key focus areas, which were modelled in more detail using business flow diagrams. This allowed us to gain a fresh common insight into the working requirements of the business, now and in the future. Third parties, such as the nursery's graphic designer and its website hosting company where also contacted to gain an understanding of possible areas for development for Elan's infrastructure. From this several key areas of improvement were identified:

1. Data redundancy was identified across Elan's systems, to tackle the issue of wasted time in re-keying information and problems with consistency of customer records.
2. How best to produce and distribute regular communications to parents, such as the newsletter
3. Keeping track of and responding to new enquiries from prospective customers, in order to improve sales conversion

Solutions

Together, an action plan with timings and resources allocated was agreed with the client, and included the following points.

1. Newsletters should be emailed directly to parents. This involved changes to Elan's contacts database and integration with the mail server
2. Data which was shared across several applications was consolidated onto one central database.
3. Recommendations for different technology to deliver new ways of engaging customers such as using an automated text messaging facility to confirm viewings with prospective parents

Feedback

Following completion of the project, Clare Coward, Director of Elan Nursery, provided the following testimonial:

“From the outset, Pete took great care to understand the needs of both my business and my customers. Running the business leaves precious little time to think about how we could be making more of our opportunities to speak to parents, and Pete provided a series of practical and effective ideas that will deliver benefits for us immediately and in the longer term. Our customers lead busy lives, and they appreciate that we are thinking about how we can communicate with them better, and that sets us apart from the competition. I would definitely recommend Pete to any business wanting to make better use of their marketing channels.”