

Case Study: Petals Network

Petals Worldwide Florist Network grows from Armidale

Global Petals Network is an international floral gift relay service similar to the flower delivery giant Interflora. The company provides real-time, online clearinghouse services to facilitate the sending, receiving and tracking of floral gift orders worldwide.

In 1992 owner Scott Williams and his business partner decided to put their small Armidale florist shop onto the world stage by developing an international floral delivery market. Reasoning that flowers are one of the few gifts that can be delivered anywhere in the world within just two hours, it seemed like a fertile opportunity.

The two owners combined their skills in marketing and data base management to build up a network of florists in Australia and overseas.

Using minimal capital, they built their strategy around discovering the weaknesses of the big market players. Once they had identified competitor weaknesses they resolved to develop a business which was strong in those particular areas. Specifically, they recognized and catered for the needs of the florists themselves who wanted a prompt, efficient and accurate service.

Once they had successfully differentiated their business, they carved a market niche for Petals Network. The business needed only a small part of the global market dominated by the big players to have a successful enterprise.

During their years of operation, Petals have won many prestigious business awards for their record of technological innovation and customer service excellence:

- September 2005: Winner of the Australian Business Limited Annual Awards 2005. President's Prize for Best Business
- July 2005: Finalist in the NSW Telstra Small Business Award for the category, businesses with six to twenty employees
- Petals Network was listed in Australia's main business magazine Business Review Weekly's Top 100 Fastest Growing Australian Businesses in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2001
- August 2001: Awarded "Best Supply Chain" award by MIS Magazine for innovative use of the Internet to ship floral orders around the world

E-commerce has the potential to open up the world for rural Australia and companies such as Petals Network show the way for other businesses.

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