

1<sup>st</sup> July 2008

## Press Release: Brand New Website

*Betty's Bureau...* STYLISH STATIONERY.BEAUTIFUL DESIGNS

Leaving my role as a PR Officer last year to take time-out, re-group and think what I wanted to do with my future, I happened upon a leaflet (handed to me by a former PR colleague) for the Enterprise and You Business Start Up scheme. This was a Foundation Degree in Business course at the local University of Northampton, government funded via Business Link with a focus on business start-ups. I gave the University a call and not doing anything by halves, the course had already begun, but following a one-to-one with the course organiser she agreed I would find it invaluable and I started in week 4. This was October 2007.

Running my own business had been on my mind for some time, but like many people I'd got caught up in the day to day and was afraid to take the leap and of the financial consequences. Throwing caution to the wind, I felt this course would be a good challenge for me in any case, however, once I'd started developing the business plan; there was just no turning back. I loved every minute of it, the course was over the evenings with business advisors providing the sessions on all of the different areas including business planning, finance, tax & VAT, marketing, employing people, customer focus, legalities and networking.

The hardest part I found was not sourcing the products, sorting out the banking or any other formalities required when setting up in business, as I knew exactly what I was looking for and how to go about it. Yes, it took time to find all the suppliers, but that was the fun part. The hard part however, was finding a website design and development team. After all, what they would design was to be my shop window; I had to get this right. This took months, I trawled sites I loved and looked up who had developed them, I Googled, Yahoo'd and I even purchased computer magazines. This was all technically overwhelming as all I knew that I needed was a company that would understand what I required, which was a beautiful, professional, fast and efficient site, and I needed a team who would give my site, and me, their full attention and deliver exactly what I wanted.

Then finally, recommended to me through a colleague (where I was temping to keep the cash flow going), I was told about a local web developer, I checked out his website and former projects and gave him a call, this was Ben McClaren, a web developer and Managing Director of Inventicus.com and he introduced me to Craig Russell, a Graphic Designer and owner of Rustierus.co.uk.

Working out of the same office space in converted barns out towards Blisworth, Northamptonshire (near missing the pheasant on the drive in) the idyllic surroundings, scenario and duo were just the individuals I'd been looking for. A couple of former work colleagues, they too had decided to start up on their own and set up a few years previously. We met up at their offices; I armed with my detailed web brief from my business plan, and for colour inspiration I'd brought along a prop in the form of a storage box in a lovely cooking apple green. This was mid April.

When I met with the lads we hit it off straight away, this was perfect. We had a discussion around my customer base, which was aimed at women of all ages and the type of products I'd be offering, social and correspondence stationery & gifts. They understood me, were full of ideas, support and advice, but overall they listened. Understanding themselves what it's like to set up in business, they even offered a payment plan where I would pay in instalments over the period of a number of months, rather than all in one go. Once we'd agreed to progress, the first thing was for Craig to design the logo (and he wasn't the first person I'd approached to attempt it) but only after a couple of go's he nailed it and this logo design was to serve as the inspiration for the look of the site itself. Craig was also to go on and design the company stationery the letterhead, business cards & compliment slip.

Several discussions and meetings later I was called in to the offices to view Craig's first attempt at the site. I was completely bowled over, notoriously picky and hard to please he'd done it. He'd understood me completely and delivered exactly what I was looking for, we were all taken

aback to have achieved the result so quickly and we were chuffed to say the least, this was a major step, I had the visuals of what my site would be, I couldn't have been more excited, but this goes without saying that such a result in the first attempt could only have been achieved through having hit is off so well in the first instance, a real understanding of what was required and great communication between us. We worked as a real team. It had already been fun working together.

That agreed, then so began Ben's role on the technical side to deliver a fully functioning site exactly how I'd wanted. The site has to be a pleasure to use, somewhere you want to spend time in, can navigate easily and most of all, proceed to the checkout without any difficulties or irritants. I was determined from the outset that the site would not function poorly like so many of the sites I had abandoned when embarking upon my online shopping, where I'd given up through sheer frustration or clicked out of it just because it looked too hideous to spend any length of time in, where I couldn't bring myself to part with my money. The site had to be a place of tranquillity and beauty, where I would like to be and where I imagined anybody else would enjoy browsing the carefully edited selection of design led products on offer. I'm delighted with the results and this I feel Ben has achieved.

And so today, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 is the launch day. Ben will push the button and the fully functioning site for Betty's Bureau goes 'live'. It's been an exciting journey to get here and I am really looking forward to what the future holds for Betty's Bureau!

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**-ENDS-**

#### **Notes to Editors**

Betty's Bureau aims to offer you a website dedicated to offering a carefully edited collection of stylish stationery and gift items adorned with beautiful designs. We aim to bring you only the most desirable and exquisite items by design teams and established brands. Products are selected for their elegant design feature, usefulness, and gift-ability and needless to say for their quality. At the heart of the Betty's Bureau philosophy is the array of design features on the products that we'll endeavour to provide, be it the luminous and beautiful photography which garnishes them, the elegant embossed impression upon them, the pretty surface print that envelops them, the brilliantly creative illustrations which decorates them or the tactile quality of the letterpress craft that imprints them. We understand the frustrations of finding beautiful stationery and gift items for all occasions as these days we're all so pressed for time. So, we've collected together this wide range of beautiful items under one 'electronic' shop roof and in doing so we intend to provide a shopping experience that is both satisfying and pleasurable for you... and for the fortunate recipient? Hopefully it will be both a joy and a privilege to receive.