

Meet the expert **Strategy briefing / How to build a global business using interactive content**

Sponsored by Digital Craftsmen, a leading provider of virtualised dedicated hosting services.

www.digitalcraftsmen.com



Find out how to use a hosting partner to engage with audiences worldwide / evolve your business model / use content to promote your services

- Expert: Jules Brookes, MD
- Point Blank Music School: an award-winning music production and DJ school in East London
- Runs high-bandwidth interactive tutorials with a global audience
- Developing a media entertainment platform

The expert's view

Digital Craftsmen interviews Jules Brookes, MD

What are the technology trends in your business?

"There are several. Firstly, the ability to really engage with global audiences: we are teaching people around the world using interactive masterclasses. Secondly, the ability to provide sophisticated 'virtual' tools such as mixing software online. Thirdly, producing your own content to promote yourself and reach new audiences. We have our own online TV show, Friday Forum Live, and a record label which sells tracks through iTunes."

Do you charge for this TV-style content?

"No. By producing and giving away exciting and engaging content we show what can be achieved by coming on one of our courses."

What does Point Blank Music School do?

"We are a training college, teaching people how to make contemporary music using the latest technology. Our tutors are current artists and producers working with the likes of Lily Allen, Primal Scream and the Beyoncé. Our students include Leona Lewis, Goldie and Spooky."

How have you used technology to grow your business?

"It's enabled us to create a global music school out of our physical college in London. Founded in 2005, our online school offers 50 courses, including two-year online degrees. We teach 2,500 students a year online based all over the world. We have a high retention rate online too. They all seem to come back for more!"

A good hosting partner is critical for you. How do you choose the right one?

"Don't just leave it to chance on the internet; have a proper meeting with the people in charge. Visit their facilities and meet the team face to face. Make sure that they are good."

You have chosen Digital Craftsmen. Why?

"When we started our online school it was experimental. We didn't know what the usage or bandwidth requirements were going to be. Digital Craftsmen created a package that was scalable. It's not a normal shared hosting space; it's more hands-on. It's a totally different service to a non-managed server."

Your business depends on very high server 'up-time'. How do you guarantee this?

"Yes. Availability has to be high. What was cutting edge a few years ago isn't cutting edge now. Digital Craftsmen keeps us up to date with new advances and upgrade us regularly. They provide 24-hour hosting services and are very good at responding should there be a problem."

How do your online tutorials work?

"Students don't just watch videos; they take part in live broadcast masterclasses. Every week the tutor gathers the students in a virtual classroom at a specific time to demonstrate and discuss features of that week's course content."

Direct Video Response (DVR)

Students upload their assignments and tutors respond to the work, recording themselves and their desktop as they make suggestions and manipulate the work using screen capture software. The resulting feedback videos are posted online for the class to share and exercise peer review."

Can a hosting provider help grow your business strategically?

"Yes. Digital Craftsmen are good partners. From day one we had extensive conversations about what we were doing such as direct video response (DVR). They spent a lot of time learning about how the school worked."

What are your key reasons for retaining Digital Craftsmen?

"They are easy to get hold of. They do what they say. If there's a problem they get it fixed quickly. They constantly monitor the server and spot problems such as hacking. If you have anything that needs high-level monitoring skills then Digital Craftsmen are faultless. They're cutting edge."

What will the future bring?

"We're going to become more of a media outlet to help us extend our marketing reach. We are making short films featuring acts from around the world and posting them online. We also hope to develop two-way video for our masterclasses."

What does all this new technology mean for musicians and DJs?

"They are becoming more autonomous. If you've got the talent you can record it yourself and market it yourself. Now there's no excuse!"



Services

- Full support proactively managed hosting service
- Website and interactive music school hosting
- Trouble shooting

Why chosen?

- High up-time; responsiveness and proactivity
- Strategic guidance
- "Point Blank needs to stream its masterclasses and tutorials to students around the world without any glitches or downtime. We are pleased to provide an extremely resilient and scalable platform that can grow with their ambitions."

Simon Wilcox, Digital Craftsmen MD

t: 020 7183 1410 or 0845 519 5292

e: simon@digitalcraftsmen.com

www.digitalcraftsmen.com