



CASE STUDY

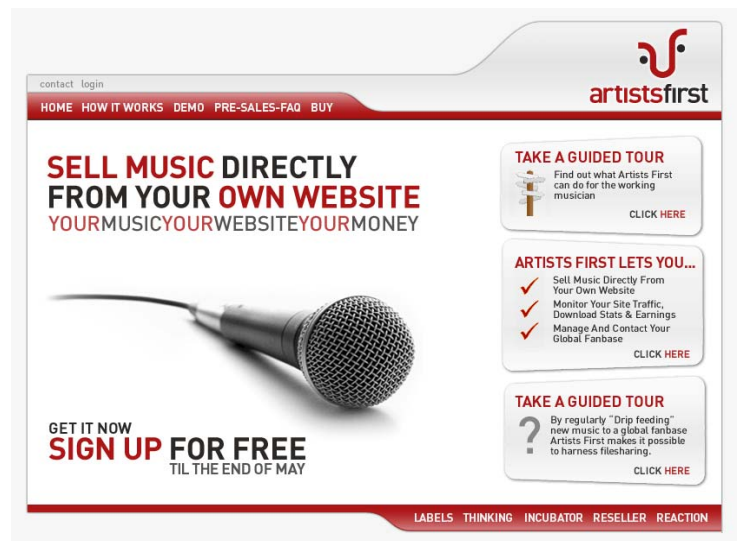
Artists First

Overview

Artists First is a new concept in online music sales. Without having to be signed by a record label, the e-commerce application and online administration system, built on Solid State Group's sophisticated CMS - WebDeck, allows clients (bands and artists) to create and sell bundles of content including music, videos and photos. It also allows them to stay in touch with their fan base via email. All this has been designed as easy to set-up and maintain at exceptionally low cost.

Website

www.artists-first.net



Background

The vast majority of file sharers simply love music and feel an album isn't worth the money compared with other forms of entertainment. Online the "consumer is king". Releasing regular new content at low cost keeps fans returning to an artist's site again and again and ends the competition with "free". The direct relationship with your fan might result in the sale of a concert ticket, a t-shirt or even a CD. The price and the uniqueness of the material are powerful incentives for fans to buy and for artists to engage with them much more directly.

When you hear a new song and you want to know more about the artist – where do you go? To iTUNES, to Napster, to MSN, to Rhapsody? No, you look up the artists' website. Artists First was set up to provide a fair deal for artists and allow them to sell music, video and other content bundles from their own website - without the need for a recording contract and the cost for the middle men.



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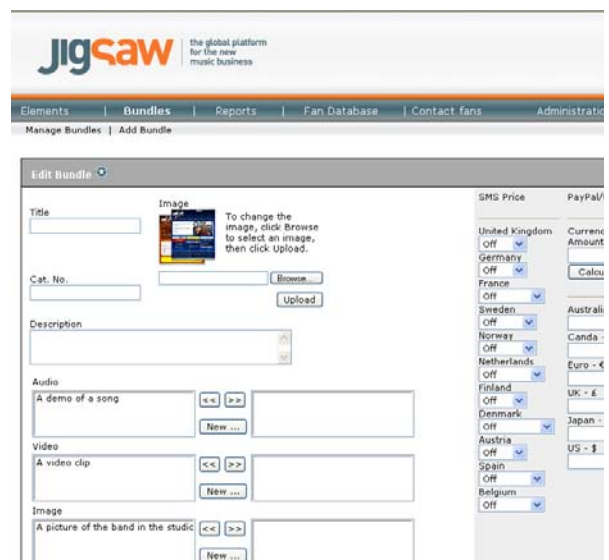
Objectives

- Allow users to sell music and other content directly to consumers over the internet
- Provide a way for users to set-up a secure account with Artists First
- Ensure that system is easy for the user to integrate with their existing site
- Provide easy payment mechanisms
- Allow users to create a variety of content bundles including MP3, video, photos, posters and more
- Allow users to price their own bundles
- Provide reporting services on bundle sales

Solution

Solid State Group was approached to develop the software driving Artists First and provided a complete bespoke software design and integration support package.

Artists First was designed to be exceptionally easy to set-up and use. After simply registering for a one-off fee, the user is provided with PIN-protected log-in details for their own personal online administration area. The PIN encryption is state of the art. The user can set PIN codes to expire and Artists First regularly change the blocks of the encryption system to ensure total security. All the user's content is hosted on secure servers in fireproof data warehouses and is backed up nightly. On their own website, the user simply pastes a short fragment of HTML code onto the home page and the system is ready to go.





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Research shows that 33% of all 12-25 year olds don't buy music online because they don't own a credit card – Artists First solves this problem. Fans can pay for their bundles using traditional web payment methods, but with Artists First they can also buy using their mobile phone bill via reverse SMS payment functionality. Over 49 different "shortcodes" have been provided for the 11 different countries available and additional shortcodes can easily be added in the future as more telecoms operators become partners.

Legal restrictions mean mobile phone operators dictate certain price points. For example in the UK you can charge 50p, £1, £1.50, £2.50, £3.50 or £5. Artists First ensures that users stick to these price points by providing convenient drop-down selection menus. Each of these price points has a unique "shortcode" (a 5 digit number) associated with it and it is this number the fan sends their SMS message to. 60 seconds later they receive a text message with a unique PIN code that they enter into the artist's site. This gives them access to the download.

The Artists First administration area allows users to simply upload content including MP3, video, photos and more. They can then bundle this and set a price for fans buying with their mobile phone and via PayPal and credit card. By keeping this price as low as possible, they can encourage fans to come back again and again. The system even allows you to turn bundles 'on' and 'off' so that availability changes on a regular basis.

Included in Artists First is a sophisticated registration facility which enables users to capture email addresses and other useful information from fans by simply adding another button to their website. This allows the user to send marketing emails to their fans/customers without being spam blocked by their email accounts. Therefore the user can inform fans of new bundles, tours, gigs and other news.

The Artists First system features accurate reporting capabilities, allowing the user to download sales figures, assess bundle popularity, review site traffic, check fan registration figures and obtain a clear monthly statement showing



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real revenue figures. This allows them to see where the fan base is developing most quickly and create groups to target sections of their base.

Artists First generates ongoing revenues for Resistance Media by taking 10% of the bundle price is taken for every bundle sold.

"Solid State Group offers an extremely flexible and supportive service which helped bring Artists First to life. Their understanding of the internet and application design has ensured that Artists First is an innovative and simple offering which can be readily used and understood by people with little or no technical skills – something that is of paramount importance to our vision. "

Thomas Reemer, Artists-First

About Solid State Group

Solid State Group is a content management, web applications and services consultancy which was founded out of a desire to provide solutions which were more time and cost-efficient.

Leveraging the managing partners experience in the IT consulting, financial and marketing sectors, Solid State Group has built a strong reputation for robust products that can be rapidly and effectively implemented across a broad range of industry sectors.

For more information please visit www.solidstategroup.com

Call 0845 838 2163 or email info@solidstategroup.com