

A Gleaming Success: Glass Tile Manufacturer Shatters Costs and Sees Sales Sparkle with New Web Site

Lightstreams Glass Tile (www.lightstreamsglasstile.com) makes distinctive glass tiles for architectural installations. To avoid the cost of selling through distributors, Lightstreams began selling tile online directly to customers. But the company's Web site was expensive to manage and didn't offer the control Lightstreams wanted. By building and managing its own Web site with Microsoft® Office Live Small Business (smallbusiness.officelive.com), Lightstreams cut costs, increased sales by 123 percent, and paved the way to success.



Company Background

After building and selling a successful industrial-laser firm, David Knox wasn't finished. Drawing on his diverse background as an entrepreneur, inventor, and artist, Knox founded Lightstreams Glass Tile in 2002. In its Mountain View, California, factory, Lightstreams's employees create distinctively beautiful glass tiles for high-end architectural installations.

Business Challenge

Lightstreams tile sold well, but printing catalogs and managing 150 distributors cost a lot of time and money. Knox began selling online, directly to customers. But Lightstreams's Web site didn't provide what Knox wanted: a site that showcased the company's unique tile and kept pace with its dynamic product line, while keeping costs down. "We had to go through our Web designer to make even the smallest change," says Knox, President of Lightstreams Glass Tile. "It was just too limiting."

Reflecting on a New Approach

Working with his administrative assistant, Knox built his own Web site using Microsoft® Office Live Small Business. "It wasn't very hard at all," says Knox. "Our Web site is pretty big, and we did it while still doing our regular jobs."

To learn more about Office Live Small Business visit: <http://smallbusiness.officelive.com>

Lightstreams uses real-time reporting features in Microsoft Office Live Small Business to monitor page views, time per view, and even viewer screen sizes. Knox uses the information to optimize the Web site quickly with the Page Editor tool. He can work on any of the Web site applications from the office, home, or while on a business trip out of the country—anywhere with an Internet connection.

A Shining Success

Since launching in January 2007, sales have grown by 123 percent, and the company is saving more \$30,000 in marketing costs annually.

Knox calls internal site management the biggest benefit of the new site. "If your site is your marketing channel, you want to control it yourself," says Knox. "I can't imagine having it outside my company again."

Easy management, useful reporting, and the ability to work on the site from anywhere frees Knox to continue innovating, so he can build a shining future for Lightstreams. "Things are happening," says Knox. "Microsoft Office Live Small Business changed our business dramatically, and I think it's just the beginning."

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David Knox, President, Lightstreams Glass Tile

Overview

Company Name: Lightstreams Glass Tile

Web Site:
www.lightstreamsglasstile.com

Employees: 13

Industry: Manufacturing

Location: Mountain View, California

Highlights:

Internal Web Site Management - Lightstreams reduced costs, increased flexibility, and freed itself from reliance on outside Web designers.

Useful Reporting - Lightstreams monitors site performance to fine tune marketing strategies.

Reduced Costs, Increased Sales - Sales are up 123 percent and marketing costs are down more than \$30,000.