

Anything left-handed

Business



Company: ActinicCustomer: Anything Left-HandedSubmitted by:

DexterityDate: October 2000It can be bad enough getting the cork out of a bottle of wine when the party has reached that hazy state where nothing is quite what it seems and even the simplest task demands fierce concentration and several attempts to get it right. And if you're one of the 90% or so of the population which is right-handed, imagine then trying to use a left-handed corkscrew.

It might well drive you to fruit juice, convinced that you should never drink again. Left-handers are used to coping in a right-handed world, of course, and would work out pretty quickly how to use a conventional corkscrew even when seriously under the influence. Knowing how to do it doesn't make it any easier however, and a large number of items, designed for right-handers, are complex, tiring or difficult to use by left-handers. Common or garden scissors, particularly when the grips are moulded for right-handed comfort, can be especially awkward. Yet tools and the like are typically made with only right-handers in mind.

In an attempt to redress matters, a militant left-handed artist set up in 1970 in Brewer Street, in London's Soho, the now famous shop Anything Left-Handed. One of the shop's suppliers, a cutler, bought the business in 1980 and it's now run by his son and daughter-in-law, Keith and Lauren Milsom, both left-handers like all the members of staff. From an initial stock of around forty items Anything Left-Handed now offers over two hundred specialist products and has expanded with franchises in Worcester, Edinburgh and Christchurch. Around fifteen years' ago the company launched its regular mail-order catalogue with about 40 items and in <https://assignbuster.com/anything-left-handed/>

November 1999 opened its ecommerce web site, implemented using Actinic Catalog, at [www. AnythingLeft-Handed.co.uk](http://www.AnythingLeft-Handed.co.uk).

“ One of the exciting things about our site”, says Lauren Milsom, “ is that it allows us to test products for sale before committing ourselves heavily to buying in stock.” Specialist left-handed products often need to be specially manufactured and neither the shop nor the mail order catalogue could rapidly identify whether or not something would sell in sufficient quantity to justify producing it. “ Being a small shop we do not have vast numbers of customers passing through each day”, adds Lauren, “ and so we can’t test market in the same way as a national chain might. The catalogue has a large circulation but is expensive to produce and has a long shelf life so isn’t really ideal for test marketing either.

“ But the web site is excellent for this.” Our ecommerce software certainly helps facilitate this test marketing process”, remarks Lauren, “ as it’s very easy to make changes to the products offered. A very definite plus factor was that it was simple to transfer our stock records from our Paradox-based system to Catalog and to keep the web site up to date this way.” Lauren and Keith Milsom asked a local web site developer, Jimi King of JK Web Design, to look into what was involved in developing a site for them and duly took his advice to install Catalog. “ JK Web Design prepared the initial site for just £3000, but now we do all the work ourselves, including taking the photographs and updating the pages, so keeping costs to a minimum. We’re very impressed with Actinic Catalog and especially pleased with how easy it is for us to make and control changes.

“ Apart from selling around 200 specialist items, Anything Left-Handed runs the Left-Handers Association and promotes 13th August annually as “ left-handed awareness day”. “ Anyone left-handed can join”, remarks Lauren, “ and there’s been a huge increase in interest since we put club details on the web site. We’ve also found significantly growing interest in our products from around the world, particularly from Japan and North America.” The shop is now taking seven or eight online orders daily and finds that about 25% of its total sales are coming through the internet, an impressive figure after only a few months. Apart from welcoming Catalog’s ease of use, Lauren praises Actinic’s support highly, “ Although we’ve not had to make much use of it “, she says, “ their help line is extremely good and the advice they give is very positive and useful.” If you’re looking for a left-handed boomerang, a left-handed keyboard or mouse, or a float to make a left-handed plasterer extremely happy then check out [www.](http://www.AnythingLeft-Handed.co.uk)

[AnythingLeft-Handed. co. uk.](http://www.AnythingLeft-Handed.co.uk) And if you’re a left-hander, frustrated by using awkward tools or household appliances which don’t work naturally for you, you might find other products to make life easier. As for Actinic Catalog, it’s just as easy to use whichever hand is dominant.