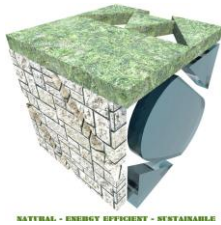


NATURAL - ENERGY EFFICIENT - SUSTAINABLE

Natural, Energy Efficient and Sustainable, Products and Services

Case Study - Company C



The Product

Company C offers a variety of products and services:

- Natural hard edge wood
- Courses and consultancy for natural building
- Courses and consultancy for conservation projects
- Carpentry courses
- Landscaping design
- They also in the process of writing a book

The company owner is a qualified carpenter and architect, which gives them an edge over almost all their competitors in the natural building sector. This gives them a valuable insight into the combination of building regulations and planning laws with natural building materials.

The company works directly with customers for workshops. They are planning to expand in the near future, whereby they will contract out work which will be completed under the company's supervision.

Courses are designed in-house allowing for existing courses to be tailored to a client's specification. Courses do not follow an off-the-self textbook and training materials are developed in house to accompany the courses.

The Industry

The market for these products and services is steadily growing. People are more and more being concerned with the idea of localised, self-sufficient, and resilient ways of living. Conventional building is being replaced by new methods, and the industry is increasingly concerned with the concept of embodied carbon produced by building materials.

Another industry change has been triggered by the economic crisis. People are increasingly searching for cheaper ways to build and one such way is to become more self-reliant. The course and products offered by Company C help facilitate this market shift.

Legal

Company C fully comply with all building legislation and is fully insured. The staff are also registered with The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI).



Quality

Company C prides itself on its customer service. They have a high attention to details and their practical and theoretical knowledge is backed up with qualifications and extensive experience. They believe that they are the only local company providing natural building courses with a proper understanding of regulations and planning laws.

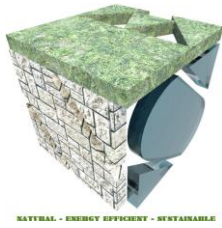
Materials are sourced locally, often from nonconventional locations but Company C's expertise ensure that materials are selected correctly and are optimal to the situation. All work is supervised monitored by the company's highly qualified staff to ensure it is performed to the highest satisfaction.

Company C believes their products and services will provide maximum satisfaction. Their products also:

- Are healthier than traditional building materials (allowing for buildings breath, thus reducing mould)
- Will help the environment by having a lower carbon footprint than alternatives
- Allow clients to have an aesthetically pleasing and individualised product.

SWOT

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional support • Strong network • Established website • Good clients • Important feedback • Marketing • R&D • Demonstration house
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote location • New company • No accommodation on-site • Limited expertise to update / maintain website • Higher price than alternatives • The market trend is towards the cheapest technology • Alternative products can sometimes have a longer lifespan
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a book • School workshops • Collaborations with private clients and with some competitors
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops commanding lower fees • Oversaturation of natural building market



Marketing

Company C uses a variety of marketing techniques and are very happy with the success of their current marketing mix. They methods they currently use are:

- Website
- Social media i.e. Facebook
- Trade shows
- Festivals
- Print media i.e. newspaper articles
- Flyers
- Posters
- Open days
- Membership organisations i.e. EBUK (Earth Building UK)

In addition, the company also gains some marketing benefits from the previously mentioned workshops and by providing courses.

Company C has previously invested in radio, newspaper and magazine adverts but felt that they were not receiving an adequate return on investment. Feedback from customers indicated that all attendees to their bespoke courses registered using the internet.

As Company C develops bespoke products, and produce their own hand-outs, manuals and guides, the company market their products and services as a premium offering, warranting a slightly higher price than competitors. They believe that most customers will pay the extra fee for the guarantee of a higher quality product and service.

Finally, Company C believes that a rapport with clients is essential. In this, they work personally with clients to ensure that clients are happy with all levels of service.

Pricing

As company C provide a variety of products and services which are often tailored for a specific purpose, it is impossible to provide a general price.

Financing

The company does not currently offer credit, so arranging finance is the clients concern. Currently there are no grants available for the products or services however on occasion the firm does offer sponsored courses where an external party pays the registration fees.