

CASE STUDY:

Artichoke Collection

A Stylish omni-channel fashion retailer working seamlessly across physical stores, a pop-up stall, a slick website, social media and an online marketplace

Started “before pop-ups were a thing”, Artichoke Collection began trading as a mobile stall, based in Hingham, Norfolk. Selling eye-catching clothes and accessories, Artichoke’s fashion ranges from unique, limited-edition pieces (where only a few are stocked) to fashion staples such as Artichoke’s wildly popular jeans. As word-of-mouth drove business, Artichoke opened a high street store in Swaffham, in addition to the pop-up, which can still be found travelling to fundraising events for charities and local events for churches, village hall committees, and flower shows.



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Artichoke Collection was started by entrepreneur Sarah Simonds, driven by her passion for fashion and retail, coupled with the need for a flexible career that can work around her family life. Years later, Sarah has not just enjoyed success with her stores; she has demonstrated a real knack for online marketing and e-commerce.

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Social media is key to Artichoke's 'soft selling' strategy. New products are promoted via Facebook and Instagram, as are marketing campaigns like "The Red Sale" – giving customers 20% off all red items to commemorate Independents' Day, celebrating independent retailers across the UK. "Everyone who buys online is invited to join the 'Artichoke Girls' Facebook group." This group is a lively setting for Sarah and her team to actively engage with customers: responding to comments and feedback, answering questions, and taking customer orders. "People who shop online with us view us as their friends," and chatting with customers directly via social media underpins this relationship.

Being a keen social media marketer, Sarah has noticed a difference between Artichoke's Facebook and Instagram accounts. "Facebook is more like a magazine, and our target customers tend to enjoy reading the text as well as perusing the pictures of our fashion. Instagram, on the other hand, is much more visual and has a younger user base. We sell through Facebook, not Instagram," but both platforms are important pillars in Artichoke's marketing.



Rounding off Artichoke's extensive online presence, the brand has enjoyed much success through listing their products on an online marketplace for independent retailers. "We have seen our sales increase by over 300% since listing." Online marketplaces, with their heavily visited websites, are an effective way of expanding customer reach and getting noticed online. It was via this route that Artichoke's jeans were showcased on a leading national TV show, resulting in hundreds of orders being placed within a few hours – exceeding even Sarah's most optimistic predictions.



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