

HUTSHOPPING

How a boating holiday spawned a business model



Company Name:
Hutshopping

Owner:
Andre Beelmann and
Thomas Klatt

Headquarters:
Münster, Germany

Industry:
Apparel

Major International Markets:
France, Italy, Netherlands,
United Kingdom

Website:
www.hutshopping.de



Former business management students Andre Beelmann and Thomas Klatt took their first steps into the real world of commerce by selling self-embroidered hats from their parents' houses in Westphalia, Germany. As sales took off, they dropped the stitches and set up their own online hat shop.

Gone fishing

Comical situations can often inspire great visions – on a boating holiday in 2000, two business management students, Andre Beelmann and Thomas Klatt, posed for a photo in full fishing gear with pulled-down bucket hats. Simple as that, their business idea was born. They wanted to sell hats online that customers could customize with logos, lettering or slogans.

Up and running

The two founders handled their first orders from their parents' houses. In response to growing competition, the hat distributors shifted their focus away from embroidery to concentrate on expanding their range of products and moved their shop to a new address, Hutshopping.de.

Hutshopping.de offered PayPal as a payment method from the start which meant their customers were confident that their payments were secure, even if they had never shopped with Hutshopping before. Only suppliers who were used to working in a somewhat conservative business environment were sceptical about online selling to begin with. To demonstrate their professionalism, Andre and Thomas changed their company from a GbR (a partnership under the civil code)



“We’ve started running mobile-optimized pages and payments for our international shops and make 40% of our sales abroad.”

-Thomas Klatt

to a limited company and changed the name to Anthec GmbH. At the same time, they broke off their business management studies in order to concentrate fully on expanding the ecommerce business. This paid off – in 2006, the inventory became so large that the existing warehouse was bursting at the seams, and they had to move to new business and warehouse facilities in Münster.

Expanding to new markets

In 2008, Hutshopping re-launched with a cleaner and more user-friendly interface. To acquire new brands as suppliers, the young entrepreneurs launched a new online store for premium headwear in 2010 called Hut.de. With a second online store, their inventory nearly doubled, meaning they needed more warehouse space, so Anthec moved again. In the Loddenheide industrial district of Münster, the entrepreneurs found a new warehouse that included offices and an adjoining retail space where customers could view the goods in person and obtain expert advice.

The company pressed ahead with plans to expand internationally. They launched targeted websites for customers in Germany (Hutshopping.de), the Netherlands (Hoedshop.nl), Italy (Capellishop.it) and the UK (Hatshopping.com). Anthec now makes 40% of its sales abroad and attributes much of this success to offering PayPal as a payment option. Andrea and Thomas find PayPal’s speed of payment confirmation helpful in updating their stock turnover. They also value PayPal’s expertise when it comes to fraud prevention for international shipments.

Anthec has been running mobile-optimized pages for smartphones and tablets for Hutshopping.de and its four international shops since 2013 – all of which offer PayPal as a mobile payment solution.

For company founders Andre and Thomas, there is no question about it. PayPal is a “must-have payment method” that benefits consumers and retailers alike.