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MYPLEASURE RISES FROM THE ASHES OF THE DOTCOM DEAD *Internet-Based Sex Toy Company Turns a Profit*

SAN FRANCISCO (August 2001) — Although “startup” has meant “failure” for most Bay Area companies and “dotcom” is now a dirty word, it’s still possible to achieve e-commerce success on the Internet. Just talk to the folks at MyPleasure (www.myleasure.com), a brand-new Internet startup company that has already managed to make money.

By capitalizing on the economic downturn, leveraging the fact that sex sells, paying attention to customer needs and responses, and drawing on the experiences of a seasoned management team, the fledgling company has carved out a successful niche in this new “new economy.” They have actually turned a profit within their first month of operation—a feat that was deemed impossible just a year ago.

“We learned from our own past mistakes, as well as from the mistakes of others,” says MyPleasure’s president and staff sexologist, Dr. Sándor Gardos—a veteran of big-name dotcoms such as About, Oxygen and ThriveOnline. “We saw what went wrong, how it went wrong, and did things exactly the opposite.”

So what exactly has MyPleasure done differently? For one thing, they bootstrapped, tightened their belts and started slowly. They didn’t have large VCs throwing millions at them—or flaky “virtual” products with limited sustainability, foosball tables, extravagant launch parties or Superbowl ads. MyPleasure created a real business plan with built-in revenue streams, developed a quality product line and hired intelligent, proven employees who were willing to work hard for quite a bit less than \$100K + stock options.

MyPleasure also entrusted their business to a management team that has been around for a little longer than 10 minutes. Culled from top e-commerce companies and possessing backgrounds in Internet technology, sex therapy, consulting, online media and the sex industry, the team has the knowledge base and expertise necessary to make this company work.

“Being able to buy network servers and barely used office furniture at pennies on the dollar doesn’t hurt either,” Dr. Gardos adds.

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It also doesn't hurt that MyPleasure is playing in a field proven to be successful—the sex industry. However, unlike other adult websites, MyPleasure isn't using sex to sell their product. Visitors to the site won't see pornographic images, lewd language, graphic sexual content or any of the other cheap marketing tactics preferred by sex sites. Instead, MyPleasure has designed a clean website with smart features, using sexual, medical and psychological health content to educate customers and help them feel comfortable about buying sexual enhancement products.

"It's possible to sell sex tastefully *and* profitably," says Dr. Gardos. "Naked pictures and pornography may draw more visitors, but it's not a route we want to take. We want to be Victoria's Secret, not Fredrick's of Hollywood."

Integral to achieving profitability has been customer service. Most adult toy companies make customers wait up to four weeks before receiving their product, and care little for customer satisfaction. MyPleasure knows that to attract the kinds of customers it wants, it will have to do a little better than that.

"We offer multiple shipping options and a 100% satisfaction guarantee," says Josh Almond, head of customer service and operations. "If the customer doesn't like the color, we take it back. If the customer doesn't like the product, we take it back—no questions asked. We want to keep our customers happy and loyal."

MyPleasure's passion for service and quality is paying off: since launching their site in May, they've hit their numbers every month and are already showing a profit, due in no small part to the dedication of their employees.

"We really believe in the company, the products and the message," says Jocelyn Saurini, MyPleasure's executive producer. "We review every product, create interesting content, and really listen to our customers."

"Yes, we work long hours," Saurini adds, "and most of us have been burned by at least one dotcom failure. But this is different ... that's been obvious to all of us since Day One, and has only been reinforced by the company's profitability."

About MYPLEASURE

MyPleasure is an online destination dedicated to improving people's sex lives by providing them access to the best toys and sexual enhancement products available. MyPleasure envisions a world in which sex toys are perceived as a safe, acceptable way for individuals and couples to share and experience pleasure, and works to achieve this goal by supplying its customers with a comfortable shopping experience, entertaining features, timely content and relevant sexual health information. Founded in May 2001, MyPleasure is owned and operated by Sawhorse Enterprises, Inc., a San Francisco-based web development company. MyPleasure's offices are located between SOMA and the Potrero Hill "multimedia gulch" at 290 Division Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. MyPleasure's new online store is located at www.myplesure.com.

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