

## Maximising the return on multi-channel retailing



### Client

GAME is Europe's leading independent specialist retailer for computer and video games, consoles and accessories. It operates online and from over 1,160 stores, concessions and franchises in nine countries.

### Goals

- ◆ Speed up the return from GAME's investment in a new operating platform for its online business
- ◆ Increase online revenues
- ◆ Create an e-commerce website that is easy and exciting to use

### Charteris' Role

- ◆ Manage the entire project and keep GAME's senior executives informed
- ◆ Deliver the enhanced website prior to the critical pre-Christmas trading period

### Results

- ◆ Increased growth in online business by a factor of 147%
- ◆ Increased web traffic to game.co.uk by a factor of 160%
- ◆ Improved sales conversion rates by a factor of 135%
- ◆ Industry praise for the site's usability and features

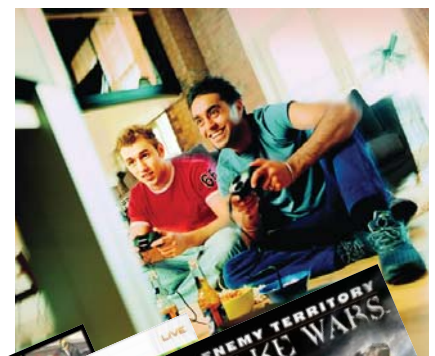
**Working together, GAME and Charteris delivered over 147% growth in online revenue in the space of a single trading year. They increased web traffic by 160% and conversion rates by 135% over the same period, whilst capturing independent industry accolades in the process.**

GAME's online business had been working with an incumbent digital agency and systems integrator for around a year. The work had been directed at designing and developing a robust operating platform upon which the business could realise its ambitions for becoming the UK's leading multi-channel retailer of PC and video games. GAME had already decided that the functional flexibility, stability and scalability that it needed was best achieved by adopting a bespoke solution based on Microsoft's ASP.Net technology. Now, however, it had choices to make.

"We were faced with a dilemma," says Alex Croft, Managing Director of GAME Group Online Business. "Should we invest heavily in 'industrial strength' web solutions and middleware to meet our long term ambitions for international growth and White Label retailing? Or would this inhibit our immediate aims for improving usability, functionality and delivering high quality merchandising online - to maximise the return during the current trading year?"

GAME turned to Charteris to provide it with an objective view of its options. By listening to the customer, Charteris quickly realised that a key frustration with the current way of working was due to a lack of delivery, focus and pace. The firm therefore put together a new approach based on three principles:

- ◆ **Sweating the existing assets** - Technically, the existing architecture was scalable and resilient enough to meet the challenges of the immediate trading year, without impacting negatively on any step change decisions that might be needed in the future.
- ◆ **Quickening the pace** - The peak-trading season was looming and to miss it would have meant delaying the business return for a further 12 months.
- ◆ **Working together effectively** - Charteris sought to build a better programme environment in which to capture fluid business needs and turn them into tangibles that could be delivered.



“What Charteris enabled us to do was to unlock the dilemma of delivering the design and functional changes we had to make before the peak trading window, whilst making the most of the existing architecture in order to keep our options open...”

**Richard Kent,**  
IT Director,  
GAME Group Online Business



### **A high level of commitment**

The new solution needed to deliver the information, product and merchandising standards that serious gamers with detailed knowledge would demand. At the same time, however, it also had to meet the needs of GAME's mainstream customer base, for whom functionality and usability really mattered.

Charteris provided the business, creative, technical and, above all, programme management skills necessary to de-risk and deliver this complex technology-enabled project. The firm used a combination of agile and waterfall development methodologies to balance the need for pace with emerging or changing business priorities and to provide discipline in delivery and coding standards.

Charteris brought in a leading specialist design house, 26London, to energise GAME's ambitions for a highly engaging site within its existing brand values. An intense period of re-design, development, testing and implementation followed with GAME being kept informed at every stage of progress through regular meetings.

Charteris' personal and business commitment to the project needed to be high to meet the aggressive timescale. At its peak, the Charteris development team was operating significantly outside the normal hours of business in order to ensure GAME's business priorities were met.

Richard Kent, IT Director at GAME Group Online Business, says: “What Charteris enabled us to do was to unlock the dilemma of delivering the design and functional changes we had to make before the peak trading window, whilst making the most of the existing architecture in order to keep our options open for creating a platform for internationalisation and White Label retailing in the medium term.”

### **An immediate success**

The new site went live to widespread critical acclaim. Firstly, webcredible.co.uk, which analyses the top 20 e-commerce sites in the UK, reported that game.co.uk had rocketed up 16 places from number 18 to second place in its survey of usability. The game.co.uk site outperformed such established and successful brands as Marks & Spencer, John Lewis, Next, Body Shop and many more.

IMRG, which runs the Hitwise Hot Shops list of the top 50 UK e-retailers, as a key indicator of online merchant performance, reported that game.co.uk was the highest placed new entrant at number 23.

More importantly, the key pre-Christmas trading window had been met with a multi-channel offer that was, for the first time, capable of outstripping the competition and driving levels of growth not previously thought achievable. In its post Christmas trading statement, GAME reported to the City that Group sales had increased by 76.3% over the six-week period ending on 12th January.

When compared with the same period in the previous year, GAME had increased:

- ◆ Online growth by a factor of 147%
- ◆ Web traffic to game.co.uk by a factor of 160%
- ◆ Conversion rates by a factor of 135%.

Work continues on developing GAME's multi-channel retail capability and the technology assets on which this strategy depends. By leveraging its programme management capability, together with its business and technology skills in multi-channel retailing, Charteris has become one of GAME's most important partners.

[www.charteris.com](http://www.charteris.com)  
email: [info@charteris.com](mailto:info@charteris.com)

**Business specialists who speak IT**  
**IT experts who think business**



### **About Charteris**

Charteris delivers greater customer focus and business efficiency through seamless business and IT consulting. Our unique blend of 'business specialists who speak IT and IT experts who think business' ensures that clients receive seamless solutions that deliver competitive edge.

Leading public and private sector organisations draw on our deep experience to help them improve performance and reduce costs. Our services include [Customer Centric Business Change](#), [Microsoft Dynamics](#) solutions and other advanced solutions based on the full spectrum of [Microsoft Technologies](#) and associated technologies.

Charteris plc, Charteris House,  
39/40 Bartholomew Close, London EC1A 7JN  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7600 9199  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7600 9212

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