MARKETPLACE FOR P2P RENTAL

WORK & LIFESTYLE

New Zealand-based Hire Things, which is currently in public beta, is promoted as a low risk, cost effective marketing channel for hire and rental services, and a facilitator for 'micro-hire-businesses'. Think of it as eBay for renting goods. The company is an enterprising mash-up of two major trends: minipreneurs (consumers turning into entrepreneurs) and transumers (consumers becoming less interested in owning). Hire Things is easy to use. Register on the website, list and price items, and choose what to display publicly and what to make visible only to your 'Trust Network'. Users receive an email when a prospective customer submits a booking request, with the estimated costs calculated automatically by Hire Things. It's up to the lessor to accept, counter or refuse the request. Once owner and customer agree, the system confirms the booking and provides each with contact information so that delivery can be arranged. Currently Hire Things doesn't charge for item listings, photo uploads or completed bookings, but later this spring they plan to charge fees for successful bookings, beginning at 5% for bookings up to NZD 100. Hire Things plans to establish similar marketplaces in Australia, the UK and other countries. The concept should definitely appeal to consumers who'd like to tackle a backyard project but get cold feet at the idea of buying tools they'll use only once, or would like to try out a new hobby without spending hundreds of dollars on something they might not be interested in three weeks from now. Launch a person-to-person hire network before Hire Things gets to your neck of the woods. Find 'riches in niches' by specializing in one area, like art, musical instruments, photography or sporting equipment. Target expats or people on holiday, or create specially themed rental packages. First, read up on what drives transumers and how other companies are catering to their desire not to own. Spotted by: Natalie Ferguson

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