



SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: CHAOS MAIL ORDER

CHAOS MAIL ORDER (WWW.CHAOSMAILORDER.COM) HAS BECOME WELL-KNOWN IN THE ONLINE COMMUNITY FOR PROVIDING GAMES WORKSHOP AND OTHER GAMING PRODUCTS TO THEIR CUSTOMERS AT A GOOD PRICE, IN A TIMELY FASHION, AND WITH EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE. FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS CHAOS MAIL ORDER HAS BEEN A STRONG SUPPORTER OF ADEPTICON. RECENTLY, WE HAD A CHANCE TO CHAT WITH MARK CRACCO, OWNER OF CHAOS MAIL ORDER, TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HIS STORE, HIMSELF, AND HIS VIEWS ON THE HOBBY.



Q – Assuming that you're a gamer yourself...how did you get into the hobby?

Mark: I did a little D&D when I was in high school, but it didn't go very far. W40K, and later Magic, got me seriously involved in playing and thinking about selling games.

Q2 – What movie, book, or television show property would you like to see made into a miniature wargame and why?

Battlestar Galactica would make a great spaceship minis or skirmish level ground game. You have a great visual element already and the desperate storyline would make every loss hurt (at least for the humans). And I'm a huge fan of the show.

Q3 – You've been in the hobby retail business for ten years with your brick and mortar store, and been doing online/mail order for seven. That's a long time in an industry where the average store struggles to survive their first year. What would you say have been some of your greatest challenges that you've had to overcome to make Chaos Mail Order a success?



Mark: There have been two major challenges in the history of Chaos Mail Order.

The first was generating a critical mass of customers when the major differentiation between us and everybody else was who had the lowest price. While we did not have the lowest prices, our quick turn around, attention to detail and customer service soon

generated word of mouth advertising and return customers.

The second, and this is a continuing struggle, has been the implementation of Games Workshop's online trading policy. We were faced with a sudden need to completely change the way we had previously interacted with customers and implement a new pricing plan simultaneously. While the store successfully weathered that period, many other online retailers failed or voluntarily closed their doors.



SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: CHAOS MAIL ORDER



Q4 – One of Chaos Mail Order's strong points is your customer service: 800 number for calls, actual people answering the phone, etc. Have you ever gotten a chance to meet your online customers in person, and what was that like?

Mark: I have had the opportunity to meet a few of our customers at Origins and Gen Con. It is exciting to put a face to a previously anonymous email contact and talk about our latest games and new hobby projects.

Q5 – What's your favorite thing(s) about running a hobby store like yours?

Mark: I get to be my own boss. If given the choice of punching a clock or setting your own hours, which would you choose?

Q6 – In your opinion, what's the greatest challenge facing the hobby industry today, and how can hobbyists help?

Mark: Our greatest challenge is to keep people focused on traditional board and miniature games when there is such a draw to video and computer games. They have a very strong visual draw, immediate gratification, and strong interaction potential. It can be hard to keep players against that draw.

Hobbyists can help their hobby by being open to new players that approach them, be understanding of the newbies, and recruiting others. That makes sure our shared interests continue to grow.

Q7 – How has the hobby industry, particularly the retail market, changed in the ten years you've been in the business?

Mark: That's a 2-second question, which I could write a novel about! The market has experienced a major explosion in companies,





SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT:

CHAOS MAIL ORDER

merchandise and options. In the beginning you had TSR, GW, FASA, SJG and a few others, often with a limited selection of games. Today there are scores of companies with multiple, healthy, product lines and games we didn't even think could happen when I first started playing.

Another major shift in the retail market were the arrival of Magic and, I hate to admit it, Pokemon. The huge demand and profitability of those lines sustained the early years of the store as well as mainstreaming gaming. That brought even more people into contact with the hobby and greatly expanded the customer base allowing continued growth and diversification

Q8 – Do you play any Games Workshop games yourself, and which games/armies do you play?

Mark: I was an avid Warhammer 40,000 and Fantasy Battles player for many years, I have a Blood Angel army and a massive Skaven Horde! Though I have been too busy to play lately.



Q9 – Do you play any non-GW games, and which ones do you play.

Mark: I am an avid Board Gamer at the moment and tear into most of the new ones that Rio Grande and Mayfair put out. My favorite from design and replay POV has been Puerto Rico.

Q10 – One last question: You're stranded on a desert island with a few friends, and you get to take one game along – which one do you bring?

Mark: World of Warcraft, but only if the island has wi-fi access...



REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.ADEPTICON.ORG TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE AT ADEPTICON 2007, THE LARGEST AND MOST EXCITING FAN-RUN GAMES WORKSHOP CONVENTION ANYWHERE. DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS ONCE-A-YEAR OPPORTUNITY! ALL EVENT TICKETS ARE SOLD ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED BASIS, SO DON'T DELAY. FOR DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF OUR EVENTS, OR TO REGISTER ONLINE, GO TO:

[HTTP://WWW.ADEPTICON.ORG](http://WWW.ADEPTICON.ORG)
ADEPTICON 2007 - FOR GAMERS, BY GAMERS