Moosejaw

Responsive eCommerce creating an optimal user experience across all devices

Moosejaw's ecommerce website was getting tired. Despite several reskins, numerous feature enhancements, and the early adoption of a responsive site design, it was still running on architecture first implemented in 2008. Unsurprisingly, the older version of WebSphere powering the Moosejaw site had performance limitations and was prone to bugs. Together, these issues led Moosejaw to migrate its website to the latest WebSphere suite, combining this with a fresh site redesign.

It was at this stage Astound Commerce came on board to handle the migration, working alongside Moosejaw's in-house development team to deliver their vision and support this with a site redesign. Astound's involvement increased website performance while retaining Moosejaw's brand personality, helping the company retain its position as a leading ecommerce player in the U.S. market.

THE ASTOUND/MOOSEJAW PROJECT LED TO A 25% IMPROVEMENT IN CONVERSION RATE, COMPOUNDED BY A 40% UPTICK IN MOBILE CONVERSIONS.

BACKGROUND

Moosejaw, the leading U.S. outdoor retailer, has always had a strong focus on ecommerce. The Moosejaw website was one of the first online shopping sites to feature a responsive design and a significant percentage of Moosejaw's sales come from mobile. However, the brand was running an older WebSphere ecommerce deployment first introduced in 2008.

Countless features had been added to the site since then to help Moosejaw stay ahead of the competition. But the dated website architecture was starting to create problems for a brand priding itself on being at the cutting edge of ecommerce technology.

This issue was compounded by the fact six years of website enhancements by different developers had created a complicated patchwork codebase that made further changes difficult. The 32-bit architecture in the version of WebSphere powering Moosejaw's website also limited site performance and was missing key features available as standard in the latest version.

However, perhaps the biggest issue for the brand was that Moosejaw's responsive site design had been applied to its existing desktop site, creating further limitations and compromises. As mobile traffic grew to represent over 25% of total visits to Moosejaw's website, the brand wanted to provide an uncompromised shopping experience across all devices, with a tailored platform for mobile users. At this stage, it was clear this would be more than a migration. Moosejaw needed a full site overhaul.

PUTTING MOOSEJAW ON TOP

In 2014, Moosejaw decided it was time to redesign its website and turned to Astound Commerce as the ecommerce platform expert to make this a reality.

"WE NEEDED A PARTNER CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING OUR POSITION IN THE MARKET AND MOOSEJAW'S SPECIFIC NEEDS"

MICHAEL MOORE, CTO AT MOOSEJAW

Igor Peshkov, VP Partnerships and Client Services at Astound added: "Moosejaw required a responsive website with dynamic servicing. But Astound went one step further, tailoring the look and feel of the website to the specific device the consumer is using in a way that minimised server load and maximised performance."

Moosejaw's old website was built on Version 6 of the WebSphere Commerce Server (WCS) ecommerce platform and had been running this deployment for over six years. In addition to assisting with the migration to WCS Version 7, Astound provided day-to-day support for the existing Version 6 suite to streamline the process.

Astound took an augmented staff approach, providing a dedicated team of engineers and service delivery professionals as an extension of Moosejaw's internal development team. This included offering extensive WebSphere Commerce expertise and providing Moosejaw's in-house development team with the training and support required to take control of ongoing development after the launch.

A CHALLENGE OF ECOMMERCE PROPORTIONS

The new Moosejaw website was designed to be responsive from the ground up, including a full migration from WCS Version 6 to WCS version 7. Peshkov added: "Astound focused on retaining Moosejaw's brand personality while building additional functionality into the platform. This was partly achieved by introducing IBM MQ messaging integration, native WebSphere Solr faceted search, and a number of other innovative ecommerce technologies to help Moosejaw stay one step ahead of the competition."

Talking about the working relationship with Astound, Moore commented: "I can't think of a relationship with an external agency that has ever felt more like part of the internal team than the one we experienced with Astound. The Astound European development team even shifted their working schedules to meet ours, despite the significant time difference between us."

As the website migration and redesign progressed, Moosejaw and Astound went through a series of development sprints. "As we moved towards the end of those sprint cycles, Astound really stepped up," said Moore. "Astound's ecommerce development experts also remained engaged during the implementation phase and after the roll out, providing constant and immediate support and response as required."

"USUALLY YOU'D SEE A LITTLE DIP IN CONVERSION WHILE CUSTOMERS GET USED TO THE NEW SITE AND YOU WORK THROUGH BUGS. BUT WE SAW CONVERSIONS INCREASE OVER 20% RIGHT AWAY THEN CONTINUE TO CLIMB"

EOIN COMERFORD, CEO AT MOOSEJAW

RESULTS

Moosejaw saw conversions increase across the board – and across all devices – led by a dramatic improvement to the user experience.

Moore added: "The migration just worked. I expected the customer services desk to receive a string of complaints or issues from customers after we took the new website live. It's expected during a major site overhaul like this. But that didn't happen. I have seen huge companies go through similar projects with twice the resources, three times the timeline, and five times the budget, and they still did not deliver a product half as good as ours."

"THE ASTOUND TEAM HAS BEEN INCREDIBLY HELPFUL AND WILLING TO WORK WITH US ON ANY NUMBER OF ISSUES, BOTH TRAINING AND PROBLEM SOLVING"

JOHNATHAN BELL, SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR AT MOOSEJAW

Mobile devices account for more than 30% of Moosejaw's traffic and nearly 15% of overall revenue. Following the website migration and redesign, mobile conversions increased by over 40% and the website loaded 20% faster than before.

THE ASTOUND COMMERCE DIFFERENCE

"The most unique aspect of working with Astound was how they felt like a real partner. The Astound development team acted as an extension of our own and had the skillset and expertise needed to meet our delivery requirements. None of the website improvements or changes we've made to date have gone as smoothly as this. We wouldn't hesitate to work with Astound again," added Moore.

PROJECT GOALS

- Migration from WCS V6 to WCS V7
- Site redesign
- Enhance the existing responsive site design
- Increase site performance
- Increase customer satisfaction and driving additional sales

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

- The UX was improved dramatically, leading to a significant uptick in conversions across the board
- Moosejaw saw mobile conversion rates improve by over 40%
- Desktop conversion also increased by 25%
- The redesigned Moosejaw website now loads 20% faster than before
- Integration for a number of innovative new technologies, including IBM MQ

IMMEDIATE VALUE

- No dip in website traffic during the redesign; conversions increased
- The new site was designed to be responsive from the ground up, catering to Moosejaw's significant proportion of mobile users
- Moosejaw's new website added new functionality, offering an enhanced customer experience
- The overall user experience was streamlined and modernised, giving a more upscale presentation of Moosejaw's brand to its customers

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