

Chrysler Group Drives Customers from Brand Sites to Local Dealerships for a Smooth Sales Experience



As one of the world's leading automotive companies, Chrysler Group manufactures and distributes cars, trucks and SUVs.

Industry

Automotive

Geography

Worldwide

Implementation Highlights

- Individually coded HTML pages for Chrysler Group's automotive and support brands are being replaced with template-based pages that allow quicker speed-to-market for marketing messages
- The replication of site infrastructures, design and content will enable Chrysler Group to increase brand consistency across all communication channels including print and Web
- 4,200+ dealer sites will be built and maintained at a lower cost and connected to Chrysler brand sites for seamless deal flow

Benefits

- Decreased production costs both for inside development as well as external agencies
- The ease and speed of Web publishing enables closer tie-ins across multiple advertising media—television, radio and print ads can refer customers to specially created Web pages for “the rest of the story”
- Fully-integrated and brand compliant dealer sites will improve and speed how online customer interactions lead to sales through dealers



“As Chrysler Group’s Internet marketing and advertising continues to expand, Web Content Management represents a key piece of infrastructure and a solution to many of our most pressing business needs.”

—Mike Morton, senior manager, Interactive Communications,

As one of the world's leading automotive companies, Chrysler Group manufactures and distributes cars, trucks and SUVs under three global brands: Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep. The Websites for each of these brands provide a wealth of information and functionality: customers can build and view more than 10 million possible vehicle configurations, search local inventories, access research data and learn about current incentives. In addition to delivering timely marketing messages, the sites must also accomplish a simple yet fundamental goal: to move customers along to a local dealer to close the sale.

For several years, Chrysler Group had been seeking to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of its Web content production processes. Manually coded HTML pages made it difficult to achieve the high level of personalization required for such an important purchasing decision and the marketing agility demanded by the highly competitive auto market. As the Internet grew into a primary marketing medium for Chrysler Group, it became increasingly urgent to address this lack of scalability as well as the high cost of manual production processes.

The right system

Chrysler Group decided to make the transition from manually-rendered HTML pages to pages deployed served from a Web Content Management (WCM) system. After spending more than a year working with the company's standard WCM software, Mike Morton, senior manager, Interactive

Communications, Chrysler Group still couldn't get it to do what he needed. “It just didn't serve our needs, and needed so much customization that it was almost like having to custom-code everything from scratch,” he recalls.

Mike Morton began researching other possibilities. As he reviewed blogs and chat room discussions by others who'd faced similar challenges, a consistent theme began to emerge: the reliability, ease-of-use, and ease-of-deployment of Interwoven's WCM solution based on Interwoven TeamSite software.

Because less customization would be needed, the project could be completed more quickly—and without requiring any additional budget allocation. After making this case to Chrysler Group's corporate IT department, Mike Morton was given the green light to proceed. With help from interactive consulting firm Avenue A/Razorfish, the new site went live on October 20, 2004.

A more responsive marketing machine

Only months after its introduction, the benefits of Chrysler Group's Interwoven solution are already clear. The transition from manually-rendered HTML to TeamSite-based templates will enable the company to get new marketing messages onto its Website more quickly and effectively than ever, while maintaining complete consistency in brand and look-and-feel.

Integration with a digital asset management system already in place makes Web and e-mail templates, pages, banner ads and

other assets readily available for efficient reuse. By bringing its external Web development agencies onto the same platform, Chrysler Group will enable them to accomplish much more work at a lower cost—a savings that will be built into future contracts.

“In evaluating our tactical focus for the coming year, there weren’t too many that don’t relate back to Interwoven as a key piece of infrastructure,” reports Morton. The ease and speed of Web page production enables a higher level of integration with other advertising media; for example, a TV or print ad can refer viewers to a page created specifically for that promotion, rather than simply the main brand site. “Interwoven gives the rest of our marketing organization confidence in sending people to the Web and knowing it will be able to keep up.” As Chrysler Group’s Internet advertising activity grows, this high level of control and flexibility will provide a powerful multiplier for its marketing budget.

TeamSite’s easy-to-use forms give Chrysler Group’s contributors a simple mechanism to rapidly enter content that is guaranteed to be consistent with corporate branding and navigation guidelines. Content is also easily re-used and kept consistent across sites and will allow Chrysler Group to maintain a seamless and intuitive experience for customers all the way from Chrysler Group’s main brand sites to the sites of the local dealerships who will close the sales.

“If you’re letting a creative person build HTML pages one at a time with no structured standards, your pages and story don’t flow well,” says Morton. In the past, this lack of control has resulted in local dealer sites that left something to be desired—including some that the company was reluctant to link to, limiting the number of referrals to those dealerships and the overall effectiveness of Chrysler Group’s sales in that location.

Now, the cost-effectiveness of the Interwoven solution will make it possible for Chrysler Group to bring its roughly 4,200 dealership sites in-house in the coming year, building and hosting them at no additional cost to the dealerships.

In addition to providing a more unified experience, this will yield a higher level of control, as Chrysler Group follows its customers through the site to learn more about them and their preferences and serve personalized pages based on this information. When new product information is available, it will be automatically replicated to local sites without relying on the dealerships themselves. Dealerships will still be able to contribute to their own sites—photographs, used car listings, information of personnel, current promotions—but strictly within a consistent, centrally-controlled brand environment. The needs of both content consistency and local contribution will be balanced and at a lower overall cost.

Even before the rollout of their Interwoven-based dealership sites, dealerships are reaping the benefits of Chrysler Group’s new Websites and sales flow-through to dealerships strategy. Usage of their dealer locator application is already up an annualized rate of 58%, and requests for quotes have risen 72%. Vehicle page views are up 46%, and usage of the vehicle configurator application has shot up 153%.

The road ahead

With its new WCM platform functioning smoothly, Chrysler Group will continue to transition content onto the Interwoven solution, including code for applications such as the vehicle configurator will soon follow in the second phase of the implementation. Dealerships will gain additional functionality and flexibility, including the ability to tie their own Websites into Chrysler’s branded sites for promotions—within a tightly controlled set of templates, of course.

In the ultimate example of cost-effective reuse, Chrysler Group’s next move will be to replicate the success of its U.S. investment by deploying similar sites worldwide: Canada first, in October 2005, followed by five other global sites scheduled to pilot soon afterwards. As any auto enthusiast knows, once you’re behind the wheel of a finely tuned, high-performance engine, the last thing you want to do is stop.

Technology

Solution Summary:

Interwoven TeamSite content management software ensures brand consistency, centralized control and faster, more efficient page production across Chrysler’s three main brand sites—Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep—as well as for financial services and other support brands. The solution will be rolled out to roughly 4,200 Chrysler dealers in the coming year to ensure seamless consistency throughout the Chrysler network. The easy to replicate and easy-to-use Templates, provide the primary tool to apply brand consistency across pages.

Interwoven OpenDeploy content distribution software helps Chrysler aggregate and distribute content cost-effectively throughout its site architecture. In the next phase of deployment, OpenDeploy will also be used to deploy code for vehicle configurators and other Web applications.

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