professional advantage

print management and logistics

At a glance

Organisation
BPA Print Management and Logistics

Industry
Print management and Logistics

Location
New South Wales, Australia

Solution
SharePoint 2013

Business Benefits
- A new, fresh looking website
- Improved Search Engine Optimisation ensures BPA appears on the first page of search results
- Content is easy to update
- Mobile responsiveness ensures the site automatically scales to suit a variety of mobile devices
- Ongoing maintenance can be managed in-house by BPA's IT team

BPA Reaches More Businesses With a SharePoint-based Website

BPA is one of Australia's leading print management and third party logistics companies. Proudly independent, BPA helps companies select the most appropriate print supplier based on their quality and pricing needs. It oversees the print process to ensure a successful outcome and can store and distribute printed, promotional and other products from its warehouses.

From end-to-end, BPA provides a speed-to-market advantage for print and mail sourcing, warehousing and distribution of marketing point of sales material. In addition, its print and logistics expertise and smart use of workflow technologies helps clients to achieve significant savings and process efficiencies.

A website for first impressions

BPA's clients range from blue chip financial, retail and consumer goods companies to small-to-medium businesses and design agencies. Many are introduced to BPA through a tender process, making the professionalism of its tender responses crucial. But at the same time, the company's management is acutely aware of the need to back submissions with a consistent, professional public face.

Sam Rhodes, Chief Technology Officer at BPA explains. "People like to learn more before they engage with us and our website is one of the key resources they turn to. The website gives us an opportunity to build credibility right from the beginning because if someone looks us up online and can see we have a compelling offering, they are likely to feel more positive about us."

Keeping it fresh

Twelve months ago it was obvious BPA's website was becoming tired. Developed some years earlier, the design was showing its age and the technology underpinning the site lacked the sophistication of modern platforms.

Rhodes says, "We weren't getting the SEO [search engine optimisation] that we wanted out of the website because it was too time-consuming to make changes. It had become quite brittle. If we made changes, there was a good chance things would break."

Rhodes knew the site was letting the company down. "If we wanted to talk to clients about our use of technologies, we needed a website that backed us up," he notes.

BPA had already been using Microsoft SharePoint 2007 as part of its internal and client workflow tool set for some time. Rhodes was preparing to upgrade to SharePoint 2013 when he realised that the Microsoft platform could be extended beyond the intranet and extranet, to provide a more flexible, functional and modern basis for the company's public-facing website.

Forming the project team

Rhodes' IT department prepared a brief for a new site based on the latest version of SharePoint. Key among their requirements were the need for greater visual appeal, an ability to work across all major browsers, touch optimisation for tablets, ease of updating and the ability to use the latest SEO techniques, analytics and tracking tools to improve visitor numbers, content effectiveness and customer interaction.

"We spent time looking at other websites to see what we liked the look of. Also, although we didn't expect to achieve this from get go, one of our aspirational goals was to get the site onto mobile devices," Rhodes adds.

Next, the team sought advice from a number of suppliers before deciding to engage Professional Advantage to develop the site. "We first engaged with Professional Advantage six years ago. They worked on the implementation of our ERP system and they have hosted it ever since. Since then PA has been hosting our Web, Intranet and Extranet solutions including our different SharePoint 2013 platform. We found it easy to go with them for this project because it was clear they were very familiar with SharePoint and they had the expertise we needed. They were also enthusiastic about it, which was important to us," Rhodes notes.

Cost savings enable fast tracking of mobile functionality

While the BPA team planned to prepare and upload their own content, Professional Advantage was asked to implement the new site design using SharePoint 2013 as the Content Management System (CMS) and to train BPA staff so that they could manage the content and the ongoing maintenance of the site. The team began by running workshops to set the foundation SEO strategy. They contributed ideas for site layout, provided advice on the development of analytics and offered suggestions on ways to save money throughout the project.

"Professional Advantage were very professional and had some really good ideas. It was a good engagement that saw everything delivered on time and on budget," Rhodes states.

SharePoint 2013 is a powerful platform for a public facing website using the latest functionality such as CS3 and HTML5 to deliver a very robust content management system. With existing responsive layout foundations, Professional Advantage were able to use design best-practice techniques to create a fully responsive website with multi-browser and device capabilities.

Unexpectedly, time and cost savings achieved along the way enabled the Professional Advantage team to deliver mobile responsiveness within the first phase of the project. "The website scales dynamically to fit on phones or tables, so actually we exceeded our goal by getting the website onto mobile devices right from the beginning," Rhodes explains. "We'd been receiving more and more requests from people who use tablets to access our workflow sites, so we're really pleased we were able to cover that off so early."

Ease of use causes sighs of relief

During the content training sessions Professional Advantage consultants were able to highlight the latest improvements in web content editing using SharePoint 2013.
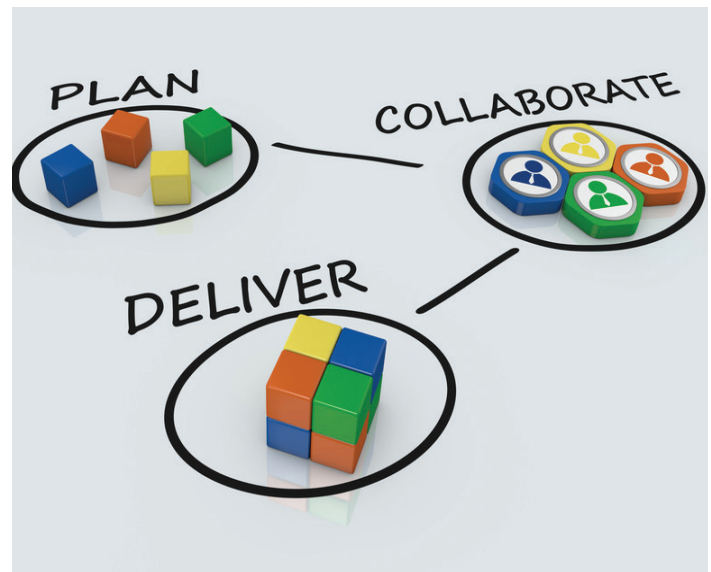
"If we'd had to take on the development internally, we'd have been interrupted all the time. It wouldn't have been practical."

The significant advances in end-user usability and accessibility goes beyond just the powerful responsive layout capabilities. Staff can now upload any image they like and SharePoint will resample and resize the picture to fit the design using Image Renditions. This alone is saving the business hours of tech support time each month. The ability to edit and crop the images to fit the defined aspect ratios online, directly in the SharePoint web interface caused sighs of relief in the training session.

Changing the URLs to be SEO friendly and editing key SEO elements of a page can now be done all in one screen through a single click, putting common SEO tasks back in the hands of the web content team instead of tech support. The staff now can try out different SEO strategies themselves and drive the future success of the website even further.

95% of the website can be updated and maintained by marketing staff. They can now easily add/remove banners, change promoted links, add/remove pages and use the draft & publishing feature to review and approve content before it goes live. Finally the website can be fully owned by the business instead of requiring constant IT involvement.

Built in support for Web Analytics tools meant that the business could easily activate a range of 3rd party visitor tracking solutions to monitor and respond to visitor behaviours, including interactive heat maps showing which sections of the home page are more popular than others, which in turn is driving the content creation process.

Rising in rankings

Using SharePoint as its web platform, the combined BPA and Professional Advantage team has created an inviting website that supports BPA's reputation and which readily engages and informs visitors.

The process of updating content has proven to be easier than expected and the early focus on SEO is clearly paying dividends as BPA now appears on the first page for many of the desired search terms.

Although BPA's IT team has a wealth of SharePoint experience, Rhodes admits, "If we'd had to take on the development internally, we'd have been interrupted all the time. It wouldn't have been practical. What I really appreciate is that Professional Advantage's consultants were able to bring an eye for design as well as SEO skills. That's something pure developers don't always have."

"The site is a massive step-up from our old one. The whole project has been money well spent," Rhodes concludes.

Enabling *High Performance* Workplaces

About Professional Advantage

Professional Advantage is one of Australia's most awarded solutions providers, with over 20 years experience in helping organisations improve their business systems through industry leading software solutions. Our 250-strong team in 6 offices across Australia and internationally has successfully worked with over 1000 organisations.

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