

Delaware North Plans for a 35-Site Revamp with RedDot CMS

ABOUT DELAWARE NORTH

Delaware North Companies (www.delawarenorth.com) is one of the world's leading hospitality and food service providers. Its family of companies include Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts, Delaware North Companies Gaming & Entertainment, Delaware North Companies Travel Hospitality Services, Delaware North Companies Sportservice, Delaware North Companies International, TD Banknorth Garden, Delta Queen Steamboat Company and American Park 'n Swap. Delaware North Companies is one of the largest privately held companies in the United States with annual revenues approaching \$2 billion and 40,000 associates serving half a billion customers in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.



CHALLENGE

To support its vast network of companies, Delaware North maintains 35 different Web sites. The main challenge for the Delaware North eBusiness department was managing Web sites that were all developed on different platforms and in disparate ways. Consequently, the sites have traditionally been maintained through different methods, including by internal resources using Dreamweaver and by outsourced vendors who worked directly for each individual business unit. The only systematic and centralized tool available was an internal application that provided tickler notices when Web pages were out of date.

This approach was problematic for Delaware North from both a technical and business perspective. Without a user-friendly content management system (CMS), the company's business owners were unable to update their individual company's Web site without the assistance of technical staff who had knowledge of HTML. Kelli Pitre, Manager of eBusiness for Delaware North, recognized the issues presented by this challenge. "From a technical perspective, we want to be on a common architectural platform and have one CMS application for all of our Web sites. And given that these sites need to be updated on a regular basis in order for them to create stickiness and drive revenue-generating traffic, it was only logical to pursue purchasing a CMS."

SOLUTION

With the overarching goal of migrating to one standard platform, the Delaware North's eBusiness department knew what requirements they wanted in a content management system. Ease of use was a primary concern, according to Pitre. "We have operations people out in field offices, such as Yosemite National Park, so it might be the rafting manager updating the rafting schedule. He doesn't know anything about the Web, he just needs to update the rafting schedule."

Price was also a checklist item for Delaware North. They were looking for an affordable system, in the low- to mid- price point range, which could be used to update all 35 Web sites. The final requirement for their new system was that it be easy to administer. As Pitre shares, "I have a small staff and I use outsourced vendors for any programming we need. So I was looking for a CMS that was not overly complex from an administrator point of view."

To find the right vendor, Delaware North researched 13 different content management systems. "Some of the systems that we looked at were very confusing and almost too robust, with too much



The Delaware North Web site.

RedDot CMS is a great application for companies who need an easy-to-use interface that their employees can just jump in, get started easily, and be able to maintain over the long term, even with staff turnover. RedDot CMS is as easy to use as Microsoft Word, so over the long term, it's a good application for consistency, cost savings, and productivity.

Kelli Pitre, Manager of eBusiness for Delaware North



functionality that we just didn't see a business need for," explains Pitre. "And the low-end systems didn't have enough functionality, nor the scalability, that we needed." RedDot Solutions was able to fulfill all three priorities for Delaware North: cost, functionality, and ease-of-use. RedDot also had a substantial client list, which distinguished it from its competitors and assured Pitre that RedDot was a financially stable and successful company.

RESULTS

Delaware North's initial plan for its RedDot CMS implementation would start with their premium travel and destination sites. After doing research on how Web visitors purchased travel services online, Delaware North created a standard information architecture in RedDot CMS that can be re-purposed repeatedly. This template, which was developed over the course of a couple of months by RedDot partner, James Tower, is called "Web in a Box". As Pitre explained, "Think of it like a house – the frame of the house is always the same and we can just put a new coat of paint on it for each of our companies' Web sites. Each site has a different look and feel because we have properties like Yosemite and Sequoia National Park that have their own unique beauty. This beauty is captured in the look and feel of the Web site, and underneath, the templated information architecture is the same for each site. We're capitalizing on RedDot CMS by creating one template and then we just simply clone it for each subsequent site, with simply a new look and feel over the top."

One of the best features of RedDot CMS, according to Pitre, is the ramp up time from a training perspective and the system's ease of use. "With RedDot CMS, you can teach someone in a matter of minutes to update their own Web site. It's very easy for people to understand what they're updating, since they are able to see the Web page as they update it. They just click on the Red Dot, make their change, and submit it to workflow. The users that have been trained were able to become proficient after only two to four hours of training."

With the "Web in a Box" approach, Delaware North is saving money on programming costs. "We're not a Web site development company so it doesn't make sense for me to staff programmers," says Pitre. "With 35 Web sites and only 4 people on staff, I couldn't possibly keep up with all the requests that we have. RedDot CMS has changed the model of how we're doing business by partnering with Web development vendors and placing the day-to-day content updates in the hands of our business units. It decreases my staff overhead, allowing the staff I have to focus more on analysis and project management."

After rolling out the Web site for Harrison Hot Springs, a resort property in Canada, Roy Azevedo, Systems Manager for that property, commented to Pitre, "We really love RedDot – it's really working for our users. It's fantastic." This was extremely valuable – and rewarding – feedback for Pitre, since she was the decision maker behind purchasing RedDot for each business unit.

Currently, two of their destination sites have been completed and launched (www.tenayalodge.com and www.harrisonresort.com), with five more underway.

| FACTS AND FIGURES | |
|---------------------|---|
| Customer: | Delaware North Companies, Inc. (http://www.delawarenorth.com/) |
| URLs: | http://www.tenayalodge.com ; http://www.harrisonresort.com ; an intranet, plus five more sites currently in development, with launch dates throughout 2006 |
| Users: | 25 (end users and programmers) |
| Pages per site: | 50-75 for the public sites; 20 for the Intranet |
| Project duration: | 4 months per public site, including 2 months of full creative design |
| Greatest challenge: | A common CMS platform for all 35 Delaware North sites; ease of use |
| Launch dates: | Tenaya Lodge – 6/2005; Harrison Hot Springs Resort & Spa – 10/2005 |
| Servers: | Win Server 2003 OS on a VMWare Server ESX 2.5, SQL Server 2000 |
| Integration: | User accounts are integrated with Active Directory |

More Case Studies can be found on www.reddot.com/customer_success.htm

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