Case Study

MSC

www.msc.com

Crafted
EXPERIENCE BETTER

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Shipping/freight

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Background

MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company S.A. is a privately owned global shipping company founded in 1970 by Gianluigi Aponte. As one of the world's leading container shipping lines with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, MSC operates from over 450 offices in more than 150 countries worldwide, with over 60,000 employees. With access to an integrated network of road, rail, and sea transport resources stretching across the globe, the company prides itself on delivering global service with local knowledge. MSC's shipping line sails on more than 200 trade routes, calling at over 315 ports.

MSC commissioned Kentico Gold Partner Crafted to create a brand new, responsive global website that could accommodate its organisational structure, working across 157 countries and eleven languages to provide a unified global presence, whilst providing each agency with the ability to update its content while being approved via Geneva. The new website was part of a global rebrand and aimed to provide an improved online presence for the company's global customer base.

Goals

The website was created to fulfil the following aims:

- Create efficiencies and improve operational productivity for MSC agencies by enabling customers to self-serve online.
- Create "the ultimate customer experience" with improved UX that brings the MSC award-winning service to users online.
- Drive-up intake of MSC ancillary services, such as haulage, logistics, and warehousing, and better optimise the website for search engines to grow MSC's customer base organically.

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Challenges

Crafted was tasked with delivering a large and sophisticated website within a challenging 14-month timeframe, including initial project pitches, research and development, and creative development. The website needed to work across eleven languages and facilitate a complicated permissions matrix that would permit 300 different users with varying levels of autonomy on the content they could upload and edit within the CMS. Local and global approval processes also had to be accounted for, enabling agency webmasters to upload content for review by the Geneva team.

Furthermore, as a global website, msc.com needed to account for cultural differences across the world. This was particularly challenging with regards to users in the Far East, where there is still a large adoption of Internet Explorer 8, which is no longer supported by Crafted's front-end framework, Zurb Foundation. Crafted needed to ensure that the website worked within this particular browser, whilst ensuring that the overall responsive experience still catered to retina mobile and tablet devices.

Solution

Crafted has delivered 157 MSC agency websites, each containing around 1,800 documents, totalling 200,000 documents globally, in eleven languages within a single Kentico Document Tree. The responsive website uses just one global domain (msc.com), with the use of Kentico negating the need for multiple country microsites, which would all require Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) support, and duplicate content by providing agencies with limited autonomy to edit their content within a global Content Management System (CMS).

An agency template was created using the refreshed MSC branding, conveying a united look and feel and ensuring consistent messaging across each of the 157 country sites. Crafted then used Kentico Link Documents to create country-specific clones of the agency template, providing each agency with its own 'website' within msc.com. These Link Documents ensure that mandatory content, such as the 'About Us' page, service pages, and a series of interactive tools appear on every country-specific instance of the website, delivering the same exceptional user experience no matter where in the world a user accesses it. Implementing the website in this way also means that individual agencies cannot change global content, which could disrupt its united presence across the world.

Although MSC wanted to restrict agency access to certain areas of the website, it was important also to enable individual agencies to upload their content to cater for differences in local markets. As a result, Crafted made use of permissions within Kentico to enable agencies to add their child pages where appropriate. For example, MSC UK inherits the global 'About Us' page through a Link Document, but a child page displays an additional 'About Us' page about the UK agency.

The use of Link Documents is particularly important with such a large website. By cloning pages, each instance of msc.com has a logical site map that can be crawled by Google. Without this, the site would need to rely on excessive use of 301 redirects, which can impact a website's performance in search engines and would be particularly unwanted given that the new MSC website is designed to generate new business.

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Crafted also used Kentico Roles to control the content that can be created or edited by particular agencies. When an agency, for example MSC Albania, logs into Kentico, deny permissions mean that it is only able to see content relating to its instance of the website, so it is prevented from editing content on a site belonging to another agency.

All other items, such as images, awards, FAQs and any content that is not a page in its right, are stored centrally. An example of this is the shipping glossary that appears on a range of pages, providing added value to users by enabling them to search for the definition of particular industry terms. Each definition is stored centrally, with the glossary automatically pulling in terms from the repository.

Crafted also made use of Kentico's multiple language support to translate key information across the website. Using a Custom Workflow process, agencies can upload content and click on a 'translate' button, which automatically generates an email to MSC's chosen translation service containing the file in English to be translated. The translator is then able to carry out the work and use the upload link in the email to send the newly updated file straight back into Kentico, which automatically uploads and publishes it. Custom workflows are also used to make both local and global approval processes quicker and easier, with MSC agencies uploading content to be approved by the Geneva HQ, whereas previously this was handled via email.

In addition, the use of Link Documents ensures that the website can be translated at the click of a button, enabling users to view country-specific sites in their preferred language. When users access the website, their IP address automatically decides which country's website should be displayed in which language, with users able to override this with a country selector page. Cookies are used to remember this information to ensure the correct website is presented when a visitor returns to the website in future.

Finally, with Zurb Foundation only supporting Internet Explorer 9 and above, Crafted implemented a number of progressive enhancement techniques to provide a desirable user experience for IE8 users, including conditional CSS, shims, polyfills, and custom JavaScript solutions.

Results

- The site received an average of more than **2,000,000 sessions per month**.
- The site received an average of **750,000 monthly users**.
- Engagement on the site has increased, with average pages viewed per session up from 1.65 before launch (Jan-Dec 2014) to **3.30** post-launch.
- The site contains more than **200,000 pages**.
- The new website delivers a market-leading user experience, complementing MSC's reputation for award-winning customer service and furthering its competitive edge. MSC is now the only one of its rivals to boast a responsive website, with the new site content rich and easy to use. MSC's customers can quickly and easily check shipments, calculate routes, and get quotations through a variety of helpful and engaging tools, making it faster and easier to manage their shipping needs.

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Key criteria for choosing Kentico

Kentico was chosen as the ideal CMS to meet MSC's specific list of requirements and aims for its new website:

- The new website needed to be simple for each of MSC's agencies to upload content by enabling images to be stored centrally and country webmasters to make use of global templates. As such, Kentico's simple and intuitive dashboard, complete with WYSIWYG editors, provided the perfect fit, enabling images to be stored within different folders inside the CMS Desk

- As each of these agencies has different aims and needs, the CMS needed to have careful control permissions, catering for a range of user levels. The Kentico CMS can be customised to determine access rights based upon a user's specific requirements, so provided the flexibility needed for such a large organisation

- MSC wanted the opportunity to make changes to the website over time as the shipping industry evolves. These changes could be right up to the top level navigation, with webmasters also needing the ability to add in new social media links as additional platforms are adopted. As such, it needed an extendable CMS that could grow with its organisation, so Kentico's flexibility was appealing.