Milwaukee Electric Tool

Company Profile

Since 1924, Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp. has been an industry-leading manufacturer of heavy-duty, portable electric power tools and accessories for professional users worldwide. Based in Brookfield, Wisconsin, Milwaukee is the oldest power tool brand in existence with the highest quality, durable and reliable professional tools money can buy.

Milwaukee currently employs approximately 1,000 people globally. The company continues to set industry standards, targeting professional tool users of all types with a product line that includes more than 500 tools and more than 3,500 accessories.

Business Situation

To stay competitive, it became clear to the Milwaukee executive team that their current website built in 2004 needed significant upgrading. Milwaukee conducted a web assessment and hosting performance testing to reveal what issues needed to be addressed with third-party consultants. The hosting environment proved to be unstable. Web server performance testing resulted in unidentified crashing issues. In addition, the current website developed on an IBM WebSphere platform proved to be too high of a cost structure for maintenance and future development.

After assessing their needs, Milwaukee approached Triton-Tek for a new website and hosting environment that would:
- Provide a lower cost structure
- Support new, rich media
- Support increases in website traffic
- Increase end user engagement
- Improve usability through site speed and access
- Improve search functionality
- Incorporate social media features
- Allow for flexible and easy internal website management by non-technical personnel

Solution

Technologies used:

- ASP.NET
- Microsoft Commerce Server 2007
- Javascript
- Microsoft SQL Server 2008
- LINQ to SQL
- Content Management System (CMS)
- Web Analytics (Omniture)
- Google Search Appliance
- Google free geolocation

Triton-Tek quickly created a development plan and approached the situation in phases to provide cost-effective, high caliber and flexible solutions.

Lowering cost structure
The first order of business focused on lowering the cost structure. The decision was made to replace the existing platform for the website from IBM WebSphere to ASP.NET running on Microsoft Windows server.

This platform change enabled Milwaukee employees to administer the site directly through the CMS and access the product catalog through Commerce Server without relying on a technology firm to make simple site changes (as on the IBM WebSphere platform). Licensing for Microsoft Commerce Server versus IBM Licensing created a substantial operational cost reduction and reduced monthly hosting fees. Overall, Triton-Tek was able to provide the client with a six figure operational cost reduction in year one of site operation on the Microsoft platform. The solution also included the ability to search for parts and also download PDF manuals. Additionally, web analytics were integrated into the website to record where users start, stop and how long they stay on the website.

Upgrading product catalog
Another key component called for upgrading the online product catalog. Triton-Tek recommended Microsoft Commerce Server 2007 because of its out-of-the-box sample site that could be quickly customized and extended with javascript technologies to support rich media such as product images and video demos. The commerce solution ties into the Microsoft SQL Server 2008 and LINQ to SQL for database object relational mapping.

Easy and Flexible Content Management System
To decrease the use of consultants for content changes and to keep costs low, Triton-Tek custom-developed an intuitive content management system (CMS) that controls 90% of the pages and provides a wide span of management capabilities. Non-technical business users can easily access the CMS to add photos and other content to various pages of the website.

Comprehensive search and mapping
Google Search Appliance (GSA) was integrated to return search results from the Milwaukee website. Triton-Tek also customized a service center and store locator look up that utilizes Google free geolocation.

Increase end user engagement and traffic
To get customers more involved and increase traffic, Triton-Tek custom-developed functionality around the Heavy Duty Club, which allows members to enter contests, read and submit reviews, tool registration & management and receive rebates and promotions. Triton-Tek also developed the infrastructure around Sawzall.com, Milwaukee Ink, and E-Service that each provided Milwaukee with the ability to provide a valuable user experience while capturing critical end user data and analytics that enhance business and marketing efforts.

Results

Through a customized solution from Triton-Tek, Milwaukee Electric Tool:

- Produced a state-of-the-art website affordably
- Reduced hosting costs by more than 60%
- Experienced a 30% reduction in operational costs to "keep-the-business-running"
- Increased SEO with an immediate increase in search traffic
- More than doubled site traffic in users per month from 100,000 to well over 200,000
- Gained the flexibility to build micro-sites on the platform at a lower cost
- Achieved 3-year positive trend for a market share shift from ~ 2% to ~10%