



Iconic American Retailer

Case Study

Iconic American retailer uses the Crownpeak hybrid CMS for experience-driven commerce

This internationally recognized outdoor retailer with \$1.6 billion in sales and over 5000 employees has steadily built its business by combining direct-to-consumer sales with exceptional customer service. Based in the United States, the company initially sold its patented hunting boots and other outdoor gear through mail order catalogs, and later expanded to include brick-and-mortar stores. Over the years, it has pioneered using state-of-the-art technologies to deliver great customer experiences.

The company became a category leader in the era of call center commerce in the last third of the twentieth century. It created and mailed seasonal and specialty catalogs to its ever-expanding customer lists. It then offered seamless customer experiences over the telephone, around-the-clock. Few competitors could match the firm's know-how for catalog marketing, call center sales, product support and supply chain management.

Overview

Goals

- Encouraging customers to discover more products
- Enhance the shopping experience

Challenges

- Existing platform lacked marketing capabilities
- Difficult to modify published web pages
- Complex content management

Solution

- Crownpeak CMS
- Personalized content implemented
- Product catalog extended
- No longer need to use HTML to create web pages

Results

- Hybrid (headless+) CMS enables content-driven commerce experiences on multiple channels
- Greatly simplifies the management of commerce content for marketers
- Saved 675 hours of IT staff time annually on the homepage alone for faster time to value and greater ROI

Not surprisingly, this retailer became a technology innovator and had a strong IT culture. With no off-the-shelf systems available, the company developed its own enterprise applications to support its unique business processes. The retailer was also one of the early adopters for doing business over the web.

Leveraging its cataloging and call center expertise, it launched its first e-commerce site in the late 1990s. Since then, the company has steadily enhanced its online capabilities by adopting IBM WebSphere Commerce as its e-commerce platform, and by integrating with various existing applications. But still, it struggled with the important task of managing commerce content, and lacked the capabilities needed to deliver the experiences the company is known for, online.

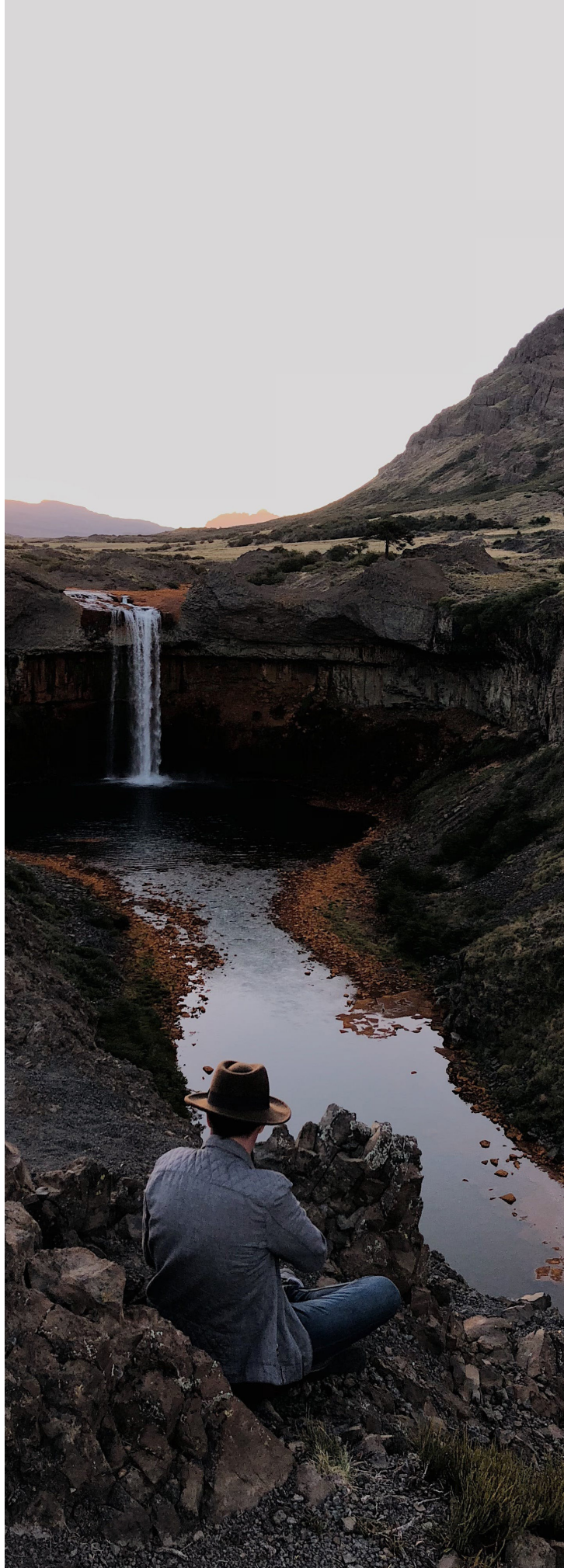
Challenges: Simplifying content management for digital marketers

Simply focusing on e-commerce through digital cataloging and customer service had its limits. The e-commerce platform enabled a site where customers could “buy” but not “shop”. While the retailer excelled in merchandising its products over the web for thousands of SKUs, it lagged in its capabilities to market them with promotional text, shoppable videos, etc.

Once published, web pages were difficult to modify. In fact, marketers and graphic designers had to contend with time-consuming steps for updating content on the site, and lengthy processes involving working with IT development teams for launching promotional campaigns. They produced marketing messages and related images, replicating the content development activities for printed catalogs. Then IT staffers manually created and modified individual web pages.

Any changes marketers or designers wanted, IT had to implement. Not surprisingly, there were multiple review and approval steps as well as frequent hand offs among marketers, graphic designers, and IT staffers. This led to drawn-out schedules and added costs.

As the web became an ever-more essential channel for connecting with customers, the retailer realized that it needed to enhance its content management and digital experience capabilities. Needed was a hybrid web content management (WCM) system that would shift the company to a more experience-driven commerce model while putting marketers in control of content creation and campaign management. To remain competitive in the fast-changing outdoor-recreational sector, marketers sought to accelerate their digital marketing initiatives.



Solution:

Marketers directly manage personalized content

The retailer assessed several content management (CMS) options, eventually selecting the FirstSpirit hybrid CMS as the best solution for integrating with IBM WebSphere Commerce and leveraging its existing IT investments.

First, the company leveraged the integration between the two systems to extend product catalog functionality with rich content management capabilities that could both be managed from one simple and intuitive user interface. Marketers have one single and unified view of both the product catalog content (from the e-commerce platform) and the promotional content from FirstSpirit, without needing to log into separate systems. Also, from this point forward there was no longer a need to create pages using HTML—a huge early win that increased productivity exponentially.

With these new capabilities in place, marketers now can easily manage the entire content + commerce experience, while infusing critical pages that convey the promotional themes for merchandising and selling such as the home page and category-specific landing pages—with the marketing messages, themes, and media assets that drive better customer experiences.

Easy-to-use features such as templates and content reuse help the marketing team rapidly create content once and ensure that updates appear on all relevant web pages. They can preview their changes before going live, test variations to optimize performance, and deliver personalized versions of content for better experiences at every stage of the customer journey. Pages automatically render correctly on PCs, smartphones, and tablets. FirstSpirit delivers exactly the content elements required for the experience and device.

Additionally, marketers use FirstSpirit's powerful campaign management tool to plan, schedule, and execute multiple future-state versions of campaign and promotional pages at the same time allowing them to create and stage content for future holiday promotions, sales, etc. Event-based triggers release the pages at predefined times, allowing marketers to, for example, update specific promotional pages within the website while continuing to feature seasonal marketing campaigns.

Results:

The power of content + commerce for a Digital Experience Edge

The business results for introducing FirstSpirit begin with the time saved for managing content on the website and e-commerce pages. Prior to FirstSpirit, when relying on manual steps, IT staffers needed about thirteen (13) hours to modify and test changes to a web page. By adopting FirstSpirit, marketers manage the updates on their own, removing the need for any IT staffing time. Based upon their process of weekly marketing updates to individual web pages, IT workloads were reduced by 676 hours (or 84.5 days) per page per year.

Moreover, marketers can now focus on what they do best – marketing. No longer hamstrung by frequent hand-offs and lengthy IT development processes, marketing operates more efficiently and effectively. Marketers manage campaigns based on business needs, not IT schedules. They directly plan their campaigns and quickly test different approaches, enabling them to increase their overall productivity. And they have the flexibility to rapidly respond to new opportunities.

All in all, by adopting the FirstSpirit hybrid CMS and integrating it into its e-commerce platform, the company better leverages its IT investments, enhances its promotional capabilities, and accommodates shifting consumer trends more rapidly. As an iconic retailer in a fast-changing sector, the company is able to have a greater competitive advantage or edge, launching more campaigns with less overhead and effort for greater productivity, faster time to market and greater time to value. Perhaps most important, they deliver the digital experiences that compel customers to action for improved sales.

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