



T.D. Williamson, Inc.
www.tdwilliamson.com

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Manufacturing—Oil and gas

Customer Profile

T.D. Williamson, Inc. (TDW) is a privately owned pipeline equipment and services company founded in 1920 and based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It employs 1,575 people.

Business Situation

A website created in 2003 did not adequately reflect the company's broad international presence or its strength in services and solutions.

Solution

With SpringPoint Technologies, TDW built a new website that supports multiple languages and incorporates analytics, workflow-based content management, and personalization.

Benefits

- Consistent worldwide branding
- Significant growth in website traffic and unique visitors
- Reduced rate of request-for-quote abandonment, from 80 percent to zero
- Powerful competitive differentiation
- Extensible foundation for solutions

Innovator in Pipeline Products and Services Launches Strong Global Web Presence

"With this website we are driving our brand forward, reaching out to new and existing customers, and solidifying our status as an industry leader."

Steve Johnson, Director of Strategic Marketing, T.D. Williamson

T.D. Williamson, Inc. (TDW), one of the world's leading providers of pipeline equipment and services, has long had a major international presence and a strong solution orientation, but the company's original website did not fully reflect that. Working with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner SpringPoint Technologies, TDW developed a new site based on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 that incorporates workflow-based content management, analytics, personalization, and support for multiple languages and locales. Compared with activity on the prior site, unique visitors on the new site have grown by a factor of 4 and page views by a factor of 25, and the request-for-quote abandonment rate has fallen from 80 percent to zero. As a result, TDW is better promoting its brand, reaching more customers, and differentiating itself more strongly from competitors.



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Situation

Founded in 1920 and headquartered in Tulsa, Oklahoma, T.D. Williamson, Inc. (TDW) is one of the world’s most recognized names in pipeline equipment and services. The company delivers products and solutions for onshore and offshore applications, including hot tapping (modifying equipment in service) and plugging, pipeline cleaning, and geometry and magnetic-flux leakage inspection for any pressurized pipeline system in the 37 countries where TDW does business.

Because of its significant international focus, TDW has long committed itself to a strong collaboration with its hundreds of partners and thousands of customers worldwide. Until recently, however, this commitment was not reflected in the company’s Internet presence.

For example, the company’s corporate website, launched in 2003, lacked content in languages other than English and was not integrated or consistent with subsites developed independently by the company’s overseas offices. In addition, the TDW site did not adequately emphasize the company’s longtime leadership in services and solutions, as well as in products.

“We have delivered leading-edge products, services, and solutions for nearly a century and to locations all over the world, but our prior website did not reflect that,” says Jim Greenway, Global Web Publisher, T.D. Williamson. “It was essentially a product catalog built on static HTML, with no content management or analytics, and no easy way to update existing content. Our company has always been very future oriented, but the site was not, and we needed to do something about it.”

Solution

To address the website problems, Greenway and his colleagues conducted an evaluation of Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 and a competing content management technology that was based on Java. “We knew very little about Office SharePoint Server at the time, and one of our vendors was urging us to consider the competing technology,” Greenway says. “But after spending a full two months on the evaluation, we decided that an out-of-the-box solution like SharePoint Server was our best bet for meeting aggressive deadlines and managing customization.”

In particular, Greenway and his colleagues liked the multilanguage support that is built into Office SharePoint Server 2007, the product’s security and search capabilities, its support for workflow-based content management, and its potential for integration with the company’s enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, which is based on Microsoft Dynamics ERP software. They also felt that Office SharePoint Server 2007 would fit well with the company’s growing commitment to Microsoft technologies in general.

“The Value of Having a Solid CMS”

To handle development, Greenway enlisted the services of Microsoft Gold Certified Partner SpringPoint Technologies. A team of six SpringPoint Technologies developers spent just over six months implementing an enterprise content management system (CMS) based on Office SharePoint Server 2007 and collaborating with a separate vendor responsible for designing creative elements using Microsoft Office SharePoint Designer 2007. The developers incorporated extensive analytics, personalization, and support for five languages: English, Spanish, French, Russian, and Chinese (Simplified Mandarin).

“The experience showed us the value of having a solid CMS [content management system] for supporting an ever-changing, external-facing website.”

Travis Short, President,
SpringPoint Technologies

According to Travis Short, President, SpringPoint Technologies, the project was an ambitious one. “We had built solutions on Office SharePoint Server 2007 before, but this was the largest such project, in addition to being our first engagement with TDW,” he says. “The project also was unique in the level of personalization, search, and analytics we implemented in collaboration with the international offices. The experience showed us the value of having a solid CMS for supporting an ever-changing, external-facing website.”

To promote the website, Greenway and his colleagues launched a campaign that he says was nearly as big as developing the site itself. The campaign included advertising in online and traditional print media, recurring notices in the company newsletter, messages in invoices, and an article in the company’s quarterly news magazine. It also included an employee “scavenger hunt” on the website, in-person demonstrations at offices worldwide, and training focused on helping sales representatives direct customers to the site.

Major International Reach

In Greenway’s opinion, the biggest difference between the prior TDW website and the current one is its growing international reach. By late 2010, every one of the site’s more than 850 pages of content will be available in all five of the languages introduced at rollout and, by early 2011 will be available in two more (German and Portuguese). As a result, virtually all employees, suppliers, distributors, and customers will be able to access content in their own language.

“Finally, we will have a site that reflects the global nature of TDW—not only that we have offices in over three dozen countries, but that fully half of our business and more than half of our distributors come from

outside the United States,” Greenway says. “This is why the analytics capabilities are so important, enabling us to monitor who visits and from where, to better meet their language and other local needs.”

In addition to analytics, the site relies on a workflow-based content management system to ensure that content is not only localized for TDW’s global audience, but also absolutely current. “Content on everything from products and services to training and marketing campaigns can be fully edited from within the CMS,” Greenway explains. “Human Resources can update the career part of the site, Marketing Communications can update collateral, product managers can update pricing, and so on. Then, each and every update is automatically sent out for translation and back through our Legal department before being posted to the site.”

Benefits

For Greenway and his colleagues at TDW, the newly launched website is delivering major benefits, at virtually every level. The site is helping the company to promote its brand consistently and globally, and to maintain its industry leadership. It is delivering more prospective customers and potentially boosting revenues. The site also is helping to further differentiate TDW from the competition.

Consistent and Effective Branding

According to Steve Johnson, Director of Strategic Marketing at T.D. Williamson, the current site supports the TDW brand very effectively. “With this website we are driving our brand forward, reaching out to new and existing customers, and solidifying our status as an industry leader,” he says. “We are building a global unification of our brand and delivering a consistent message worldwide.”

“Power users can create new pages with little to no IT involvement, reducing the time required to publish new content from two weeks down to just three days.”

Jim Greenway, Global Web Publisher,
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Inherent to the company’s brand is its reputation for innovation, which the website reinforces as well. “Just as TDW pioneered the pipeline pig [clearing device], the hot-tapping machine, and other technologies that are now standard in the industry, we are leaps and bounds ahead of the competition with our new website,” Greenway says. “No one else provides the degree of personalization or translation that we do. No one else ensures that users can get practically anywhere they need to on the site in just three clicks—but we do.”

Maintaining Customer Interest

Not surprisingly, the new website is generating a lot of traffic, with average monthly page views growing from 20,000 on the old site to more than 500,000 in each of the first two months after launch, and unique monthly visitors growing from fewer than 5,000 to more than 20,000. “Even better, most of that new growth is outside the United States,” Greenway reports. “This validates the time and effort we invested in providing a fully global site.”

Supporting languages in addition to English is just one of the ways that the TDW website provides users a customized, individualized experience. Through capabilities based on the My Site feature in Office SharePoint Server 2007, the TDW site enables customers and other qualified users to create My TDW sites for accessing premium content based on their profiles. The TDW website also features a cross-sell and up-sell matrix, informing customers of products and services similar or complementary to the ones that they are ordering, and supports sharing and favorites.

“These capabilities help users experience our website in the ways that work best for them,” Greenway explains. “This is especially important for our larger

customers and others who visit the site regularly.”

Thanks to these capabilities and others that Greenway and his colleagues built with the help of SharePoint personalization technology, TDW has dramatically reduced the rate of “abandonment.” This occurs when a prospective customer opens a request for quote (RFQ) and, for whatever reason, abandons it before entering all the required information.

“When a returning visitor opens an RFQ, the site automatically populates the entire request and alerts someone in the relevant TDW department so that they can proactively contact the visitor,” Greenway explains. “As a result, our RFQ abandonment rate has fallen from 80 percent to zero.”

Greenway acknowledges that it is too soon to know how many of those RFQs are converting into sales. “But we do know there is simply more interest all around, and that cannot help but mean more revenue for TDW,” he adds.

Dynamic, Easy-to-Maintain Site

One way that Greenway and his colleagues will be able to confirm a growth in sales is by augmenting the site analytics, one of many enhancements they are planning for the near future. This is possible because, although the site is far larger and more functional than the old one, it is much easier to enhance and maintain.

“By using CMS controls that leverage Office SharePoint Server document libraries for review and approval, we can deploy enhancements with minimal custom coding,” Greenway explains. “Power users can create new pages with little to no IT involvement, reducing the time required to

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Greenway goes on to say how TDW can easily update the site with images of people using its products to accommodate emerging safety guidelines, or revamp the home page each month to reflect new product launches or the way people are using the site, based on the built-in analytics. "Our website is now live, dynamic, and constantly improving," he says.

Global changes to the website, such as pricing updates, are also much easier than before because they are now replicated and published practically instantaneously across all the international subsites.

"This is the most impressive thing about Office SharePoint Server 2007, making it far more powerful than other products I have used, including ColdFusion and Livelink," Greenway says. "And because the site uses dynamic navigation, I can easily add a new product or service category myself, without having to incur the costs of a developer."

Extensible Foundation for the Future

In the near future, Greenway and his colleagues will integrate the website with the enterprise ordering system so that customers can more easily view and track orders. Later, they will integrate the site with their Microsoft Dynamics ERP solution. Greenway explains that both plans are supported by the workflow-based content management capabilities of Office SharePoint Server 2007.

"In the past, I didn't think of Office SharePoint Server as a foundation for external websites, but this experience has really changed my mind," Greenway says. "Of all the products I have worked with over the past dozen years, Office SharePoint Server 2007 provides the

most efficient approach to [content management] that I have seen. It's central to what makes our site so powerful and so reflective of our standing as an industry innovator."

For More Information

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