

CASE STUDY

SSA Global



“The successful launch of the intranet project was fundamental to the success of the implementation overall”

MEDIASURFACE




VENSON KUCHIPUDI, DIRECTOR, WEB SOLUTIONS TEAM, SSA GLOBAL

PROFILE

SSA Global is a worldwide provider of ERP solutions in numerous industries. Headquartered in Chicago, IL, they have offices in 63 locations around the world. In addition to their core business, SSA also offer integrated extension solutions including corporate performance management, customer relationship management, product lifecycle management, supply chain management and supplier relationship management.

SYNOPSIS

SSA Global took the decision to implement a proprietary Content Management System (CMS) when the number of sites and volume of information being updated across the worldwide sites grew to an unmanageable level. The content was being managed via an outdated piece of difficult and unwieldy legacy software, and the existing sites were not scalable and were unable to handle increased content or traffic volumes. Using Mediasurface, SSA were able to create comprehensive, scalable, fully regionalized sites, managed and maintained by the staff in those regions. Other CMS systems evaluated were found to have too much unnecessary and superfluous functionality which was felt to detract from the main point of the new implementation. The new site has transformed content management in the company, with local authors taking responsibility for their own content and sites. The regional sites now truly reflect the nature of the local market and are maintained regularly by those who understand the region they serve.



Employees right across the SSA Global network now actively turn to the websites for information and guidance on a vast range of subjects

Since implementing Mediasurface, these problems have been eradicated.

INTRODUCTION

SSA Global has grown at a rapid rate in the past few years, as the result of a number of acquisitions. Their existing website was based on an inherited architecture, using a custom written, in-house piece of software, based on difficult-to-use web forms. There was no dedicated Content Management System (CMS) in place, which meant IT were faced with the perennial issue of having to spend more of their time simply managing the company websites instead of working on more strategically important tasks.

The vision was to create multiple regional sites, with content being reused and repurposed across the world, all managed and maintained by the regional staff in these locations. The new brand recently launched by the company also needed embedding into the regions, especially so where there was a newly acquired company. SSA also wanted to reduce the burden on IT by moving website maintenance to the offices themselves.

SSA Global needed to implement a solution that could handle thousands of pages of multilingual content, work with multiple file types and also be able to span the company intranet, external internet and a channel portal for suppliers.


THE MEDIASURFACE SOLUTION

Ensuring the buy-in of the various departments was a key driver to the success of the new project. To ensure that this buy-in was achieved at an early stage, the Web Solutions team began the implementation in the Human Resources department. HR information is one of the most common staff requests, and by ensuring that any piece of HR information an employee could want was available online via the company intranet, SSA Global ensured that the first reactions to the new implementation were positive. The intranet has now become so successful, email requests for information to the HR team are now a thing of the past and the intranet has become the main source of all HR information company-wide. This success was replicated across various other departments and functions.

REVOLUTIONIZING THE EVERYDAY TASK

Indeed, one of the key successes in implementing the Mediasurface solution has been the revolutionizing of SSA Global's weekly report schedule. Prior to the CMS, reports were simply emailed to recipients, with revisions and new versions simply being re-sent as necessary. This way of disseminating information often caused problems with recipients reviewing different versions. Since implementing Mediasurface, these problems have been eradicated. Reports are now saved in a central location on the intranet, and the recipients simply download the 'master copy' and work on it, safe in the knowledge that it is always the most current and up to date version.

REGIONAL SITES

The creation of regional sites has increased the visibility of SSA Global in those regions. By focusing directly on local issues and relevant topics, the offices are much more 'in touch' with their area. The key benefit here is that the sites are truly localized, not just one site translated onto the local language. In addition, by having the power to update, create and manage the website content locally, the employees in a particular office are able to respond immediately to local events or news – a task that would otherwise have taken days, weeks or even months to complete. As Venson Kuchipudi, Director of SSA Global's Web Solutions Team comments, "making changes to the sites is no big deal now – it only takes a few minutes." 

Users can access any number of types of information, selecting the one that best suits their particular needs

DEVOLVING RESPONSIBILITY

Devolving the responsibility for maintaining and updating the site to the users 'on the ground' has led to a much greater appreciation of the medium, and the power it offers as a communication device. Employees right across the SSA Global network now actively turn to the websites for information and guidance on a vast range of subjects, from basic HR questions to detailed product or service specifications. There is also a much wider understanding of the corporate requirements for a website – branding, identity and image are all vital, yet intangible, elements that must be maintained.

Prior to the installation of Mediasurface 5.2, the Web Solutions team were handling a massive number of change requests every day. Venson estimates that if responsibility had remained within his team, he would have needed five times the number of current staff just to keep up with the demand.

“THE INTRANET IS KING”

Venson and the Web Solutions team now take pleasure from the way in which the various sites have been completely adopted by the departments, on a local, regional and global level, saying that “the intranet is king”. Staff are empowered to update and maintain the content, and site users realize that it is a living, breathing site with up to date and relevant information, in turn completing a self-fulfilling prophecy of active content management begetting more active content management.

BRAND COHESION

By ensuring that all the regional sites and corporate pages are fully branded, there is no longer the problem of “rogue” websites running in different offices and locations. According to Venson, “branding and corporate identity is now a non-issue”. He continued, “We control the templates and layouts that the offices can use, and they can't break it, but they can tailor the content to suit their region”. By using Mediasurface, the various departments and offices can now create pages and sections directly relevant to their market and visitor base, while at the same time adhering to the corporate identity and image.

SINGLE REPOSITORY

Another more intangible success has been the reduction in disparate collections of the same information being held by individual departments. By maintaining a single, central repository of files, users know where the item will be stored and that it will be the latest version available. This also has a positive impact on the efficiency and accuracy of maintaining information, as there is only a single source to locate and update. In addition, the repository handles every file type imaginable, which means users can access any number of types of information, selecting the one that best suits their particular needs each time. An affiliated benefit to this is the new search capability. Users can now find the item they need in a matter of seconds, as everything is centrally stored and indexed. For a company like SSA Global, with thousands of pages and items of content worldwide, this is an invaluable tool, and the capability of the Mediasurface search facility proved to be a significant differentiator for them.



REDUCED TIME TO BENEFIT

Because of the change in responsibilities for site maintenance, both the individual departments and the Web Solutions team are seeing vast improvements in response times. When all the change requests for website maintenance were funneled through the IT department, simple content changes could often take days or even weeks, simply due to the huge number of requests being received daily. This problem was exacerbated when, for example, the pages being changed were in a foreign language or non-English typeface such as Japanese or Russian. In these situations, each party would endure a series of 'back and forth' communications just to ensure the spellings were correct, let alone the actual content was being changed correctly! Now, each region can change their content from their own desktops, with just a few clicks.

Venson Kuchipudi estimates that to create a new site using 'the old way' would have taken approximately 2 months, taking into consideration time and resource constraints within his team. Now, it is just a click of a button. As he says, "If they want it, they can have it!" He is now finding that usage of the revamped sites is increasing as a result of the ease of maintenance.

The website is now a focal point of information and reference

EVERYONE CAN PARTICIPATE

Because of the devolved responsibility, there has also been a shift in perception – the end users are now 'owning' their sites and taking an active part in maintaining and updating them. This positive change has filtered throughout the whole organization, and the website is now a focal point of information and reference for the employees. Also, by ensuring everyone can participate in managing the content, pockets of innovation can become global knowledge, which means best practice is rapidly spread and shared.

Implementing the Mediasurface solution has proven to be a cost-effective, time-efficient and easy to use option for SSA Global. The changes they have been able to make to their internal processes, procedures and workflows, as well as the bottom line budgets, have enabled them to work much smarter and make the most of their online presence.

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