Maxim gains business agility with Drupal re-platform, cost efficiency with Acquia Cloud

How a new CTO affected organizational transformation

When Michael Le Du joined Maxim as their Chief Technology Officer in spring of 2011, he realized their proprietary CMS was negatively impacting their online business. The website wasn't modern, the design was clunky, and the CMS was inflexible. Even the changes that should be easy to implement were extremely difficult. "We had no organizational agility," Michael said.

This negatively impacted not only the website experience, but also advertising sales. Maxim operates similar to a creative agency through selling unique advertising packages, and then delivering the functionality and execution. But there was significant delay in terms of time-to-market, which impacted their ability to sell more and execute quickly.

Not only was Maxim's CMS a barrier to success, but their website was hosted with a provider whose service wasn't as reliable as they'd like. Maxim experiences some planned traffic spikes (e.g. the May release of the annual Maxim Hot 100), but it also experiences constant unplanned spikes in traffic. Since it's not able to plan for all traffic spikes, it was critical that it moved to a hosting provider that would guarantee that the site would not fail and had the necessary expertise to know how to scale up its capacity and back down as needed.

How Maxim Rebuilt Their Digital Brand

The first hurdle to overcome was convincing Maxim's Board of Directors that the proprietary CMS that they initially invested significant dollars and years of man-hours in, would have to be written off. For most organizations this is a grueling process, and it was no different at Maxim. However, what Michael's years of experience provided was the knowledge that he needed a business sponsor. He said, "If you don't have a business sponsor, you're not going to be successful."

Michael worked closely with Bill Shaw, VP of Digital, to showcase the opportunity cost the current CMS was causing. Bill understood the inflexible platform was getting in the way of his ability both to sell and then deliver on customer expectations. Michael said, "Not having a platform that allowed us to create unique opportunities for our advertisers had hamstrung our digital business. They knew they need a more agile platform and they wanted the

COMPANY INFORMATION

- Maxim Magazine
- http://www.maxim.com/
- 90 employees
- Drupal user since 2011
- Acquia client since 2011

THE NUMBERS

- Decreased hosting cost by estimated 60%
- Re-tooled Developers to a Drupal skill set in three weeks
- Successfully launched their re-platformed site within a three-month tight timeframe

opportunity to leverage community work to rebuild Maxim's digital brand. After a thorough evaluation of Open Source CMS options, Michael and his team decided on Drupal because, "It really seemed like Drupal had critical mass, the most vibrant community and the best match for what we needed to do moving forward."

Together, they presented the board with a plan that included re-platforming on Drupal in a tight three-month timeline, moving their hosting to Acquia Cloud where they would see cost efficiency and increased reliability and hiring three new rock star developers. "For me, it wasn't just about having a more flexible platform, it was about having the development team in-house that could execute on our vision," Michael said.

The plan was approved and Maxim proceeded with having an Acquia professional services member onsite for two weeks for a JumpStart program to train his developers. Maxim took advantage of the training resources and documentation made available through the Acquia Network Library to provide additional support for their developers who didn't come with the Drupal skill set. Within several weeks they were off and running developing the new site. Once they were getting close to their launch date, Maxim took advantage of the cloud services offered through the Acquia Network—specifically Blitz, a load and performance testing service—which they used to test the Maxim TV website. They were able to simulate 1,000 concurrent users accessing the site at one time.

With an extremely aggressive timeline that involved re-tooling their developers, re-building a site from scratch, migrating content, and launching in Acquia Cloud—Maxim successfully launched the site on January 22nd, one day ahead of schedule to the January 23rd launch goal.

The Results

In addition to successfully launching ahead of schedule, Maxim has gained significant business agility. This is opening up many more digital sales opportunities as a result of how quickly the developers can now deliver creative content for advertising sales. Moving to Acquia Cloud environment has provided an estimated 60% cost savings compared to the prior hosting provider with significantly increased reliability to their site's performance. Maxim has gained business agility, which was needed to fuel the growth of their organization and online business.

MAXIM

ABOUT ALPHA MEDIA GROUP INC.

Alpha Media Group Inc. is a multimedia company and publisher of Maxim magazine, the largest young men's lifestyle magazine in America reaching nearly 11 million readers each month. Maxim Digital encompasses Maxim.com and Maxim digital editions, reaching almost 5 million unique visitors each month. Maxim magazine publishes 20 editions worldwide and is distributed in 63 territories.

FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF

- Learn more about Acquia products and services at **www.acquia.com/ products-services**
- Contact sales@acquia.com
- Or call 855.430.7700

acquia™