



Flight Centre Travel Group Accelerates Digital and Mobile Strategy with Drupal

Global Travel Provider Achieves Agility for Network of Retail and Corporate Travel Sites

Flight Centre Travel Group sought a content management system to support growing demand for digital content, marketing campaigns, and online customer interaction. Its main retail website, www.flightcentre.com.au, is one of Australia's most visited online travel destinations. Flight Centre embarked on a strategy to ensure it could best capitalise on its leading market position through its 60 retail websites and one corporate travel website, FCMTravel (<http://fcm.travel>), which runs in 80 countries.

As the travel group expanded, the demand to publish content more frequently and support Flight Centre's sales and content marketing initiatives increased. The travel group accelerated its digital and mobile strategy by migrating to the Drupal open source content management platform, with global support from Acquia, to provide a great digital experience for its customers.

How They Did It

Flight Centre had been using a proprietary web content management system, IBM WCM (CMS), overlaid with home-grown applications and architecture. Speed to market was elusive; the system couldn't provide the flexibility and agility that Flight Centre needed to support marketing campaigns, commerce applications, and online customer interactions.

As Flight Centre investigated options for a CMS, robustness, flexibility, cost, and support were determining factors. The potential of upgrading its existing CMS was quickly dismissed, as was a Microsoft option. Instead, the Flight Centre team favoured an open source solution, which would provide greater flexibility and speed to add functionality and customise their site.

"We thoroughly evaluated the web content management market," said Kiel Frost, team leader of digital solutions at Flight Centre Travel Group, adding that the team tested five open source products over six months. "In each case, we looked at what was available, where it is going, the roadmap, and size of the support community."



Flight Centre

- www.flightcentre.com.au
- Drupal user since 2012
- Acquia client since 2012

With an active community of more than 30,000 developers who share their contributions and a significant enterprise user base, it was clear that Drupal had the flexibility and promise to meet Flight Centre's growing needs. Coupled with the local support of Acquia, the decision became much easier to make.

Acquia provides support for Flight Centre's hardware and operating systems, supporting its web servers and cloud technology with dedicated Technical Account Management to ensure that the company keeps on track with Drupal framework standards for performance and security. From a strategic perspective, Flight Centre also gains access to specialists within Acquia for performance and testing, and the community at large for any longer-term considerations.

"Acquia's extensive experience in deploying and maintaining enterprise Drupal sites and the company's on-the-ground support team led us to select Acquia and Drupal for the project," Frost said. "Acquia is also hosting the Drupal deployments, which gets rid of layers of work; we couldn't have done it any more cost effectively ourselves."

The Results

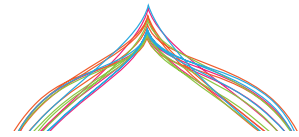
Migration to the new CMS provided the opportunity to add value to the sites. For example, the company wanted to leverage search engine optimisation (SEO) and online enquiry conversions. In the first instance, however, a quick win was to simplify workflow processes. With one main site (FCM Travel) operating in 80 countries, updating content to share across these countries with minimal localisation became easy and saved time and effort immediately. Furthermore, this also provides the ability to implement a global content repository to share content and assist with Flight Centre's global brand and content strategy.

The combination of Acquia and Drupal gives Flight Centre an agile platform to create engaging multichannel digital experiences for its customers. Marketers at Flight Centre now have unmatched flexibility to optimise the mix of content and social capabilities quickly via responsive websites to convert prospects into loyal, engaged customers. SEO value for any website is critical. Having retrained a significant proportion of its in-house developer team, it has significant competitive advantage in support of innovation and given its team valuable career skills.

It also has allowed more flexibility for displaying products, together with the ability for users to search for available products with faceted-based search options using Acquia Search, a fully managed SaaS offering from Acquia. Acquia Search is based on Apache Solr and integrates seamlessly with Drupal applications for fully faceted search functionality.

Global support was another reason for Flight Centre to make the switch to Drupal. Since starting to deploy sites twelve months ago, Flight Centre has had on-phone support as needed, along with dedicated people to help on site. The group has also been able to use its relationship with Acquia to develop stronger bonds with the Drupal community, helping to drive the future direction of software development and leverage this benefit for global rollouts in the U.K. and South Africa.

"Acquia's global presence was crucial to us," said Mr. Frost. "We now have peace of mind to know that we are deploying a supported solution with a strong developer community behind it." He says the business case for the migration to Drupal was predicated on cost savings, but in reality, the ability to deploy new services globally and rapidly is the real winner.



LET'S TALK

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— Kiel Frost, Team Leader of Digital Solutions, Flight Centre Travel Group

The Numbers

- 30 brands, including one main site operating in 80 countries
- 60 individual sites and services
- 50 percent of developers upskilled to Drupal
- Site traffic: key retail brands
- Flight Centre Australia: 3 million visit per month
- Escape Travel Australia: 400,000 visits per month
- Student Flight Australia: 200,000 visits per month

Success Enabled With...

- Acquia Cloud
- Acquia Search (Apache Solr)
- Acquia Technical Account Managers
- 24x7 Client Advisory and Support