



Sitecore
Case Study:



LifeScript – Increasing revenue and improving the customer experience for more than 10 million email subscribers with Sitecore

Summary

LifeScript is the one of the fastest-growing online health publishers and #1 website dedicated to women’s health. The company provides practical, female-friendly content on diet and fitness, weight loss, anti-aging, relationships, family health and other topics. When LifeScript decided to re-architect its site to improve organic search and user experience, the company turned to Sitecore.

Challenge

In mid 2005, LifeScript had more than 1 million newsletter subscribers to its general health information e-newsletter LifeScript Healthy Advantage, and wanted to incorporate advertising into its website. Within 60 days, the company built an internal CMS based on its e-newsletter distribution model. The system was set up to warehouse content files.

As LifeScript grew, it launched five additional newsletter titles:

- LifeScript Living with Diabetes, a daily e-newsletter for diabetics;
- LifeScript Healthy Appetite, a daily healthy recipe e-newsletter;
- LifeScript Diet and Fitness, a daily e-newsletter with dieting and fitness advice;

- LifeScript Daily Reflections, an inspirational and motivational e-newsletter;
- LifeScript Daily Horoscope.

These e-newsletters now have more than approximately 10 million subscribers. The LifeScript web site receives approximately 4 million unique visitors and 30-40 million page views each month.

When Laurie Berger joined LifeScript in 2006 as editor-in-chief, she had a vision to improve the site with a more editorial-oriented architecture that would enhance overall user experience, increase page views and boost advertising revenue.

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LifeScript
Site

www.lifescrpt.com





At the same time, the company wanted to rebuild the site on a new platform that would increase organic search and drive more traffic than its existing, home-grown CMS. LifeScript needed a CMS solution that could handle its high volume of traffic, manage 150,000 content assets which were increasing in number daily and improve its online branding.

Two main goals they had for the new site:

1. Improve user experience—and increase the number of page views per visit
2. Improve natural search abilities

It was also imperative that LifeScript be able to maintain its high site traffic—even during the transition to a new CMS.

Solution

LifeScript was a Microsoft shop, and they wanted to utilize the .NET framework. They were impressed with Sitecore's flexibility, scalability and ability to integrate with other applications.

Once they designed the new site's information architecture, LifeScript integrated Sitecore with its content partners' feeds. This includes databases for recipes, health encyclopedia, and daily health news.

The biggest challenge was importing all of LifeScript's existing content into the new CMS, then properly distributing and displaying it throughout the site.

Consultant Martin Knudsen, who had previously worked on more than 20 Sitecore projects, helped LifeScript create a "taxonomy solution" that automatically populated content boxes with relevant content.

According to LifeScript COO Jack Hogan, "From a technical point of view, one of our biggest challenges was consuming all of the external feeds of data, as well as our internal content and getting them into the CMS. We quickly realized that with 75 channels and subchannels, we had to develop a content tagging system. We were fortunate to leverage Martin's expertise."

The new LifeScript is a content-rich site organized by vertical channels. Each web page features content boxes that allow editors to program content in a variety of configurations. The boxes can be populated manually or automatically. The latter is accomplished with taxonomy tags, making it quick and easy for editors to produce and update web pages. Enter a few taxonomy terms, diet and nutrition for example, and the box automatically pulls diet and nutrition content based on those rules.

Says Hogan, "Sitecore was key to allowing us to create a content-rich site. At the same time we launched, we also quadrupled the content assets on the site. Now, content is automatically populated within different channel and subchannel pages, and we were able to leverage the Sitecore engines to help do this."

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Rollout

There was no loss in site traffic during rollout. LifeScript launched the new site in three phases:

Phase 1: Over a four-week window, it slowly brought in the alpha site to ensure page-view visits wouldn't decrease.

Phase 2: In this phase, LifeScript started bringing in real traffic through its newsletters and slowly introduced new titles into the traffic flow.

Phase 3: Finally, LifeScript flipped to full beta and all traffic was brought into the new website. At this point, the company had a good idea of what to expect, and it built an application to redirect the old URLs structure into the new system.

Says Hogan, "We were happily surprised that we were able to maintain our traffic flow during the rollout of our Sitecore site, and ultimately the actual page view per visit increased."

Result

Through its newly redesigned portal, LifeScript makes it faster and easier for women to find, share and use that information in their daily lives. It also provides a platform for advertisers to reach the Internet's most active health decision-makers. LifeScript now ranks #3 in independent commercial health sites (comScore) and #2 most popular on the Hitwise index. The company has grown nearly 200% annually, attracting more than 4 million unique monthly site visitors and over 10 million subscribers to its six daily e-newsletters. In 2008, LifeScript was named one of the fastest-growing U.S. companies by *Inc.* magazine (Inc. 5000) and the *Orange County Business Journal*.

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Sitecore Case Study:



“Sitecore has been a huge win in terms of cost and time savings, and will take us well into the future as a top site for women’s health.”

**—Jack Hogan,
COO, LifeScript**

LifeScript sends out nearly 25 million emails a day, and they have more than 45,000 unique assets/articles on the site. A staff of seven editors and designers manages and maintains the entire site and newsletter production. Some of the benefits of their new site include:

- **Improved organic search:** Previously, only 7% of LifeScript’s content was spidered by search engines. Today, it’s driving more traffic than ever to their site.
 - **Ability to make rapid changes:** Analytics are critical to LifeScript, and Sitecore enables the company to rapidly deploy changes to the site, based on these metrics.
 - **Organized, relevant content:** The taxonomy engine that utilizes the Sitecore link database speeds up processing and displays content based on user’s preferences. Now, based on analytics and traffic patterns, LifeScript can “slice and dice” content; the search terms users enter will determine what content is displayed.
 - **Scheduling:** Editors are using Sitecore and the newsletter template system to create newsletters and schedule them weeks in advance.
 - **Time savings:** What used to take weeks of work can now be done in a couple of hours without IT intervention. Says Hogan, “Sitecore has been a huge win in terms of cost and time savings.”
- **Increased revenue:** The revenue has increased, with an increase in key advertising partnerships, which equals an increase of millions of dollars per year.
 - **Content is in the hands of end users:** Sitecore has allowed LifeScript to make rapid changes to different content types within the information architecture. Content programming is now in the hands of editors.

Hogan and the team at LifeScript have deemed the project “a huge success...This project has been a win across all departments. Sitecore will take us well into the future and help us maintain a top site for women’s health.”

Technology Description

Solution Special Ingredients

Lucene for custom grouped search

Google Analytics for search and analytics

Message Systems for newsletter engine

VMWare and 3Par Storage for cloud computing purposes

Akamai for content delivery

Ajax for site components



Sitecore’s Web Content Management System (CMS) and portal software solutions enable companies to deliver compelling web experiences. Sitecore’s award-winning CMS software makes it easy for businesses to create and keep up-to-date dynamic, full featured Web sites of all types. Sitecore’s industry leading flexibility and scalability allows companies to better leverage their content to improve customer experience and drive business growth.

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Thousands of public and private organizations, including national governments and Fortune 500 companies utilize Sitecore solutions for their Web sites. These organizations have created and now manage over 5,000 dynamic Web sites with Sitecore including Microsoft, Sara Lee, Siemens, Toshiba, Omni Hotels, Computer Associates, WebTrends and Atlanta Falcons. Sitecore has offices and representatives in more than 50 countries around the world.