



Sitecore  
**Case Study:**



## Barfoot & Thompson – Auckland’s leading real estate company connects buyers with their dream homes using Sitecore

### Summary

The largest privately owned real estate company in New Zealand, Barfoot & Thompson is a leader in online sophistication with 900 salespeople across 60 branches digitally connected today, with roots back to their original founders.

Wanting to provide better value to sellers through increased property exposure along with increasing ease of use and accessibility for prospective buyers, Barfoot & Thompson looked to a new content management solution that would empower their marketing team while integrating with their existing legacy applications. Sitecore, with its flexibility and ability to separate content and presentation, quickly became Barfoot & Thompson’s CMS of choice.

### Challenge

Barfoot & Thompson’s previous .ASP site was largely built and maintained by an external organisation, and was subject to various limitations:

1. Lack of framework or code management structure
2. Site control and knowledge dependent on more costly outside resources
3. Content editing limited to IT resource availability rather than in marketing’s hands
4. Industry standard compliant code (.NET/CSS/XHTML) was required for future development and SEO needs
5. Back-end data sources were spread across numerous databases and database technologies

Changes to and maintenance of the site came at an unnecessary cost, leading Barfoot & Thompson to begin the search for a scalable enterprise CMS that could remove the content bottleneck, capitalise on their in-house staff and bring site control back to the marketing team while retaining the first class web experience users had come to expect. This, in turn, would free the IT department from having to spend the time on what often amount to fairly minor changes to the site.

Barfoot & Thompson’s goals for the new site included:

- **Standardisation:** Industry standard browser code (XHTML) and adoption of layout and functional processes familiar to site users
- **SEO:** Better SEO and higher Google (and other search engine) rankings
- **Content re-use:** Separation of content and presentation to easily re-purpose content
- **Mobile optimisation:** Rendering for devices such as PDAs and mobile phones

### Solution

Barfoot & Thompson partnered with Datacom, New Zealand’s largest locally owned IT company whose extensive experience in custom systems integration includes one of the first Sitecore solutions in New Zealand. Datacom’s ability to understand the real estate business and take a flexible, pragmatic and agile approach to development ensured they were the partner of choice.

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Barfoot & Thompson  
Site

[www.barfoot.co.nz](http://www.barfoot.co.nz)



## Sitecore Case Study:



*“Though the licensing costs and constraints of MOSS put Sitecore firmly in the lead, the absolute clincher in the deal was the way Sitecore works. Its clean separation of presentation and content, scalability and development flexibility guaranteed easy future development and integration.”*

**— Bruce Davis-Goff,  
Web Manager,  
Barfoot & Thompson**



According to Derek Best, solution architect, Datacom, “The biggest challenge in most CMS projects is effectively integrating with external data sources and existing legacy applications. Sitecore’s highly modular and pluggable architecture, together with its XSLT presentation capability and efficient caching scheme, made displaying and filtering a large set of property data fed from a separate system very simple, fast, flexible and easy to maintain.”

Having engaged Datacom, Barfoot & Thompson’s search for the appropriate CMS began. Narrowing down an initial varied pool that included PHP / MYSQL solutions, the following CMS solutions were considered: Sitecore, Microsoft Office SharePoint (MOSS), Joomla, and Kentico.

From there, according to Bruce Davis-Goff, web manager, Barfoot & Thompson, “Our CMS decision boiled down to just two: Sitecore and MOSS. While the licensing costs and constraints of MOSS put Sitecore firmly in the lead, the absolute clincher in the deal was the way Sitecore works. This includes Sitecore’s flexibility in determining the code delivered to a user agent; its XML driven, hierarchical structure providing clean separation of presentation and content, its scalability, development flexibility, device independence and the guarantee of easy future development and integration.”

### Result

Today Barfoot & Thompson boasts a fresh, vibrant web design with dramatic changes to the look and feel of the site, incorporating dynamic database-driven content and functionality. As their developed skills add value to the company, the marketing department can now utilise their resources to fully participate in the management of the site. This has created a feeling of ownership that further increases the sense that the site is a living, breathing entity.

Updates are now achievable in days instead of months, and transference of site control to the in-house content

editing staff of five has resulted in substantial savings to the business. “Due to the amazing flexibility of the XML/XSLT approach,” says Davis-Goff, “coupled with Sitecore’s brilliance as a web development platform, we can think of a new feature and deploy it the same day.”

In part due to the improved SEO delivering great value for buyers, vendors, agents and the company as a whole, Barfoot & Thompson has experienced a surge in unique site visitors: from approximately 170,000 per month to 300,000 with the new site, bringing Barfoot & Thompson’s existing online presence to a new level and attracting new prospects.

Search engines now find, index and rate content higher thanks to semantically correcting coding including removing tables, adding unique page titles, relevant keywords, proper use of heading elements, search engine friendly URLs, machine-readable text-based menu links (as opposed to image based) and lightweight, modern, best practice CSS coding techniques.

The new site is a solid platform for ongoing developments and enhancements to the site’s winning user experience; according to Davis-Goff, “Barfoot & Thompson’s future plans are based on Sitecore being a key element in our content and digital asset management strategy and we are confident Sitecore will accommodate all these requirements for years to come.”

### Technology Description

Solution Special Ingredients

*MySQL Integration – .NET MySQL connectors for legacy databases*

*Custom URL resolvers*

*Aggressive caching and pre-fetching of property listings related data*

*XSLT and JavaScript based functionality (in light boxes, forms etc.) making use of the Prototype library*

*Calendar module*



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 update dynamic, full-featured websites of all types. Sitecore’s industry leading flexibility and scalability allows companies to better leverage their content, improve customer experience and drive business growth.

Thousands of public and private organizations, including national governments and Fortune 500 companies utilize Sitecore solutions for their websites. These organizations have created and now manage more than 20,000 dynamic websites with Sitecore including Microsoft, Sara Lee, Siemens, Toshiba, Omni Hotels, Computer Associates, ISS and Atlanta Falcons. Sitecore has offices and representatives in more than 50 countries around the world.

**Sitecore**  
[www.sitecore.net](http://www.sitecore.net)

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