VILLAGE ROADSHOW THEME PARKS

Australian theme park leader scores success with Sitecore

Village Roadshow Theme Parks creates frictionless customer experience across websites to entice guests, drive ticket sales

Industry: Entertainment • Founded: 1989 • Employees: 2,500-3,000 seasonally
Headquarters: Gold Coast, Australia • themeparks.com.au

Village Roadshow Theme Parks (VRTP) is Australia's largest theme park operator, providing thrilling entertainment, rides, and slides. Its attractions — including Warner Bros. Movie World, Sea World, Wet'n'Wild, Paradise Country, Australian Outback Spectacular, Sea World Resort, and Topgolf — draw over 5 million guests annually from all over the world.

The Challenge

With its sandy beaches, spectacular hiking, great restaurants, and more, Australia's Gold Coast is an international tourist hub for 13 million visitors every year. VRTP resorts and theme parks are top draws, but to prevail over competing attractions the company aimed to refresh its outdated suite of websites. Missing from the sites were mobile optimization — a serious drawback since most vacationers use smartphones — personalized messaging, video capability, and real-time information about ride closures, and scheduled maintenance.

"We're in the business of providing world class Theme Park and Resort experiences, with key business objectives to sell tickets/experiences and drive visitation to our properties," says Renee Soutar, VRTP's General Manager of Marketing. "Sitecore supports that through a frictionless and personalised digital CX."

The Sitecore Solution

Each of its theme park or resort websites carries a distinct look, but VRTP also wants them to feel like part of the same family. Several years ago, it had implemented Sitecore as its centralized content management platform to enable this.

Now the company wanted to move a step further to deliver a personalized, mobile-optimized, and content-rich customer experience.

VRTP upgraded to Sitecore® Experience Platform™ 8.2 and added Sitecore® Experience Database™ (xDB), running on Amazon Web Services (AWS) for cloud speed and flexibility. Sitecore partner Guerrilla Digital helped VRTP develop a global information architecture and build six new websites.

To streamline the project, VRTP used a headless approach to component development, which makes content accessible via application programming interfaces. VRTP builds components, such as hero images and calls to action, just once, then manages the placement and styling of them centrally across all the sites.

75%
Ecommerce revenue increase over 15 months

44%
Ecommerce conversion rate

11%
Rise in average order value

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> — Renee Soutar, *GM of Marketing, Village Roadshow Theme Parks*

Establishing a headless architecture meant we were able to decouple the frontend and backend development and speed up development and delivery of our sites" says Andrew Elks, VRTP's Digital Delivery Manager. Component reusability has provided a consistent, reliable platform to test, enhance and maintain moving into the future.

VRTP wanted to make sure the right content reaches the right audiences through personalization. It started out with eight customer personas but soon simplified down to three: families, thrill seekers and relaxed.

"Sitecore enabled us to take our personalization far beyond anything we've done before. But we're mindful to not bite off more than we can chew, so we've taken a crawl, walk, run approach," Soutar said. "We're building content to support those initial personas and then will expand beyond those as we dial-up our resourcing."

VRTP wanted its new sites to be transactional as well as informational. To enable customer ticket purchases, VRTP integrated Sitecore with the Accesso e-commerce application. Sitecore® Federated Experience Manager™ (FXM) tracks customers as they move out of the VRTP site into the ticketing engine. To gain insight, VRTP records the trigger goals and outcomes in Sitecore based on information coming to xDB through FXM.

The Outcome

The first two sites VRTP launched on the new platform were Warner Bros. Movie World (January 31, 2018) and Sea World. The results were dramatic. Warner Bros. Movie World quickly saw a new-customer growth rate exceeding 40%, and its site hits rose by 30%. Mobile visitation rose 27%. Sea World's site hits leaped 64% through organic online searches. Return visitation to the site improved by 75%.

VRTP was able to internally build their remaining six sites, each site taking around 3 weeks from start to finish and leveraging the same component architecture used throughout the existing sites. Over the first 15 months, revenue increased 75%, e-commerce conversion rates by 44%, and order value rose 11%. Those results have continued to improve with new content and site rollouts.

Over the next year, VRTP plans to further leverage xDB to refine personalization. It's also moving ahead to upgrade to Sitecore XP 9 and implement Sitecore xConnect functionality to integrate additional digital marketing platforms, such as Salesforce Marketing Cloud.

"Our guests' digital experiences have improved significantly. The websites are easier to use, more aesthetically pleasing, better integrated from a branding perspective, and more relevant," Soutar said. "Our goal was to transform the guest journey with immersive, personalized, and frictionless experiences to facilitate more meaningful engagement — and thereby to increase our profitability. This project delivers 100% on that vision."

To learn more visit sitecore.com
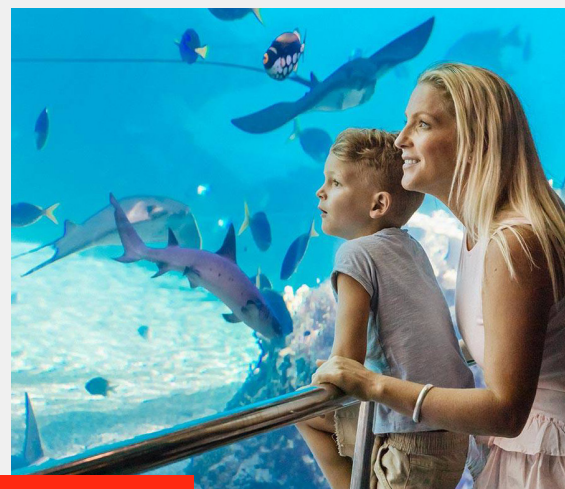
Success Snapshot

- Sitecore® Experience Platform™ (XP 8.2)
  - Sitecore Forms
- Sitecore® Experience Database™ (xDB)
- Sitecore® Federated Experience Manager™ (FXM)
  - Improve guest experience and engagement
  - Differentiate from competing Gold Coast attractions
  - Increase ticket sale revenues
  - Scale across multiple sites

Guerrilla

Sitecore Silver Implementation Partner

Guerrilla is a results-focused, full service digital agency in Australia delivering end- to-end solutions from consultancy and strategy to design and development for a diverse client portfolio. Guerrilla's in-house specialists stay up to date with the latest technologies and marketing communications methodologies for the digital environment.

guerrilla.com.au