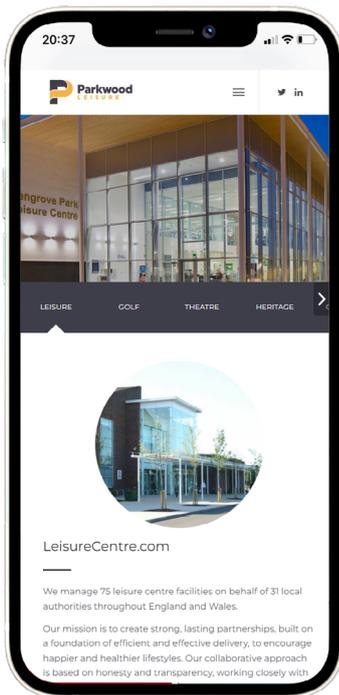


Parkwood Leisure Accelerates Digital Transformation Efforts With Magnolia

Marketing Team
Unleashed - Gaining
Increased Freedom &
Flexibility



Industry: Travel & Tourism
Country: United Kingdom
Site: www.leisurecentre.com



Parkwood Leisure specializes in developing and operating leisure facilities, visitor attraction centers, golf courses, heritage sites, and theatres on behalf of local authority clients.

Founded in 1995, they manage more than 80 facilities on behalf of 31 local authorities throughout England and Wales.

Over the years, the digital architecture had become dated, and with new marketing talent being brought into the business, standard marketing programs of work (e.g. conversion optimisation, search engine optimisation etc.) were not easily managed. Additionally, with such a complex taxonomy (many sites, with different needs), it was not possible to achieve operating efficiencies, so it was time for a change.

As part of its digital transformation, Parkwood Leisure (along with their development partner IO Studios) invested in finding a solution to reduce duplication of effort, the need for technical assistance and to focus on more strategic initiatives.

The Challenge

Upgrading From a Legacy System

With a complex business operating model that spanned across many sites, the digital architecture had evolved and was no longer fit for purpose. This large digital footprint and complex setup was now limiting Parkwood Leisure's ability to both optimize the current operation but also restricted the ability to grow the business at scale.

Parkwood needed to find a flexible technology that could offer a phased approach, allowing them to migrate from the existing architecture over time. They had to ensure that frontend design components and backend applications remained in situ, whilst initial migrations could be tested for both web analytics but also site performance.

The Solution

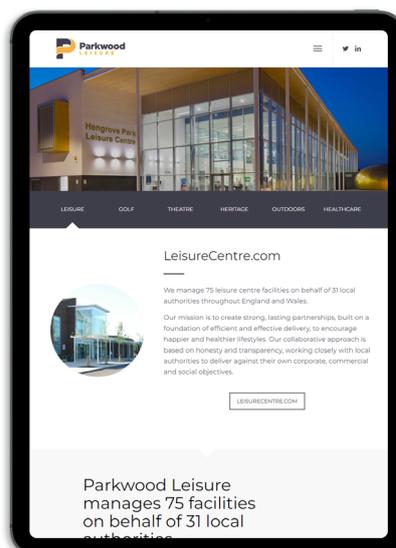
Flexible & User-friendly Product

After a 6-month market engagement, in which vendors were mainly selected with assistance from the Gartner Magic Quadrant for DXP's, Magnolia was selected due to its flexible approach to deployment, intuitive interface (key to the myriad of business stakeholders) and its 'reasonable' commercial model.

A simplified interface was a key part of the decision making process as Parkwood has over 200 CMS users with varying levels of digital skills. Furthermore, it was important that CMS users had the ability to manage a multitude of tasks autonomously to avoid creating technical support tickets. These were both slowing down the business's go-to-market agility and impacting budget control.

Migration as Smooth as Can Be

Flexibility was a key focus for IO Studios who needed to balance the needs of both the marketing team (creating a more agile and independent operating model), but also for them as a technical arm, to be able to manage sites and components once, reducing as much duplication as possible. This led to the creation of a carefully considered site taxonomy, an efficient content model, and a hub of reusable assets. The project migration plan also needed flexible options, whether this be through a phased integration approach (using both legacy and modern integration points in the first instance) and a hybrid approach to the design UX (Magnolia rendering the presentation layer before a headless approach in time), both meaning future scope as opposed to locked in technical architectures. Magnolia's 'light' approach to development and integrations also created much faster development cycles and reduced the need for any back-end coding skill sets.



The Result

From tactical to strategic - a game-changing paradigm shift

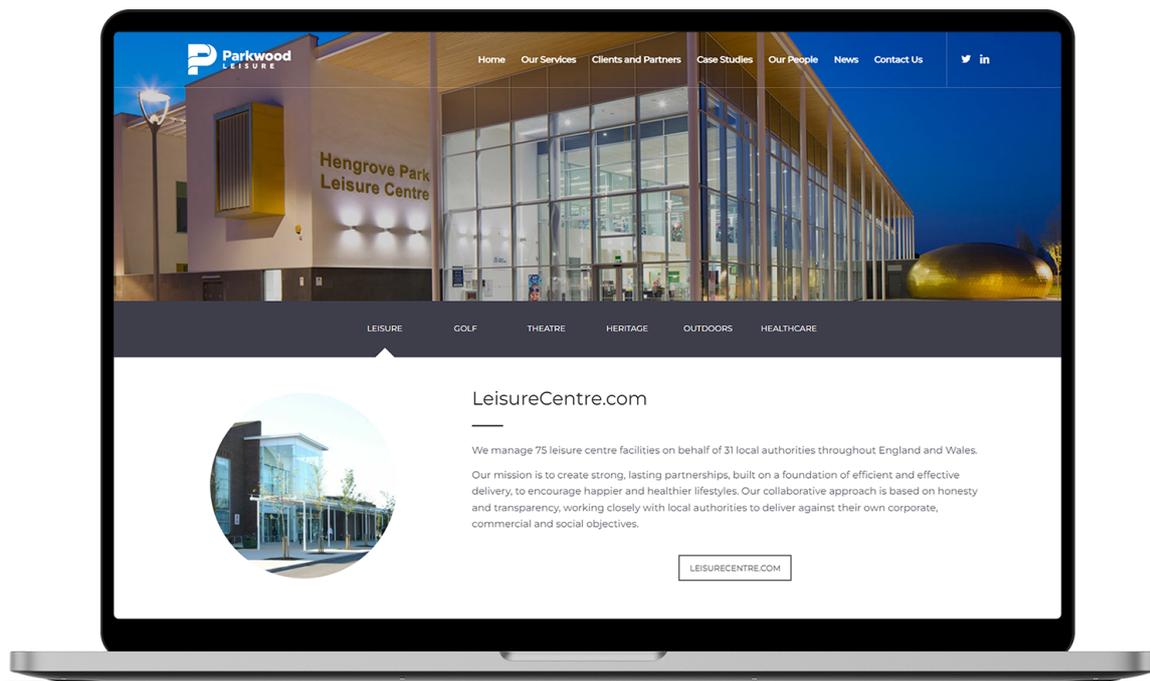
Since the initial phases of the complete migration, Parkwood Leisure has noticed a dramatic shift in both its operational agility and also in site performance.

Having both a central pool of assets to re-use and also marketing autonomy, they are creating new pages now in minutes; whereas before, this was days and sometimes weeks as it needed to go through development support processes. Marketing freedom and ease of visualization has also meant that the business can now sit directly with the centre managers and strategically discuss the best design and content for the benefit of the local centre and the area it serves. This has created a much more collaborative interaction as well as progressive nature to the dialogue.

Finally, the site itself has seen drastic performance gains in terms of page load speed, reduced from over 8 seconds to under 3 seconds, and overall average web vitals have improved by over 70%. The First Contentful Paint and the Largest Contentful Paint were reduced by more than 50%, and the speed index was reduced by more than 60% as a result. With new initiatives such as delivering content to in centre television screens and further optimizing acquisition strategies and onsite conversion testing, means that Parkwood Leisure can now significantly expand its digital footprint without impacting the business capacity. This contributed to Parkwood Leisure being awarded the Digital Transformation Award from ukactive.

“Something that would have been more technical in a non-Magnolia project could be achieved through the use of Light Development. I’d encourage anyone working with Magnolia and looking at the products to assess what they could do with light development. It allowed us to get things done much faster without outsourcing to a specialist Java team.”

– **Tom Floate**, Managing Director, IO Studios



“We’re now able to function as you would expect a modern-day marketing team. We’ve got that freedom to operate as we need to, which means our conversations have shifted from asking for help updating a page. They’ve become far more strategic, and we’re working on more significant projects that can deliver a bigger impact.”

– **David Davis**, Head of Digital Marketing, Parkwood Leisure

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