

How Steinway used Magnolia to fine-tune its digital musical experience

Steinway used Magnolia to improve its global brand recognition and to harmonize content from its dealer and artist networks



Industry
Media and entertainment

Country
United States

Site
www.steinway.com



Matching passion for artistry with dedication to innovation

Founded by Henry Steinway and his sons in New York, Steinway has developed more than 125 patents and defined the construction of the modern piano. For over 160 years, Steinway's craftsmen have sourced the best materials, combining handwork and mechanics to produce the finest grand and upright pianos used by professional pianists and musicians around the world. Magnolia reflected this artisanal perfection in Steinway's redesigned website.

Steinway wanted to move from its legacy content management platform, which was maintained but no longer state-of-the-art. It looked for a solution that offered more possibilities in design and back-end engineering. Its product range had remained stable over time, with six main products across 60 years. However, the way people learn about its products had changed dramatically, with consumers moving to mobiles, tablets and responsive design. Steinway wanted a solution that enabled it to compose harmonious digital experiences for customers in the world of piano music.

The challenge

A modern, more flexible solution

Steinway wanted to move away from its legacy platform. This was state-of-the-art at the time of implementation, but was now dated. Steinway was looking for a modern solution that offered possibilities in design and back-end engineering. E-commerce was not a primary driver, as customers mainly used the website to learn about the product. Steinway's product range remained stable over time—six main products across 60 years. However, consumer behavior had changed considerably—people use mobiles, tablets, and they expect responsive design.

Customizing data sets

Steinway first considered creating a purpose-built CMS, but realized that this would be too resource-intensive and bring little benefit. Steinway also wanted to avoid using PHP, which was viewed as complicated, as well as freely available CMS, as these were found to be underpowered. Steinway's structured data about dealers and artists meant that it required some adaptations. Magnolia offered the flexibility to customize these data sets easily. Its open architecture meant that Steinway was not tied to a particular front-end framework, but could freely choose the technology that best met its needs.

The solution

A site that made it easy to nourish relationships

It took Steinway about six months from the time of its decision to use Magnolia until the website was relaunched. The design was concluded at the same time as the final phases of engineering.

Steinway's third-party implementation partner made an assessment but was not actually familiar with Magnolia. Despite the initial lack of knowledge and experience, once the developers understood Magnolia, the benefits of its ease of use and flexibility for customizations became clear.

The new site enabled Steinway to use its digital assets more effectively, to promote its network of artists and to nourish the brand. Steinway's site is not focused on e-commerce, but is key to building the brand and building relationships with customers. Buying a piano is a significant investment stretched over months, and Steinway needs to nourish these relationships. It does this through using digital assets and integrating a newsletter, as well as news and events sections, into the site.

Easy to use dialog forms

What worked well for Steinway was Magnolia's functions for creating new components, templates and dialog construction - thus enabling content to be created efficiently in a consistent form. The developer team did not have to worry about the interface of dialog forms. It could work easily with the built-in data types and form controls.

A key question for Steinway was how to split the content and how to manage the creation process. Once the company had considered this and settled on an approach, it was easy to configure Magnolia and to develop templates, pages and components.

Easy to train local teams

Steinway uses a content schedule to coordinate among its US-based designer, content editors in New York and

regional teams for its .cn and .jp sites. Magnolia supports multiple languages and locations. It was simple to configure the right level of editorial control by giving regional users enough flexibility, but not overloading them with infinite choices. Local teams in China and Japan were easily trained on how to use Magnolia.

Creating content with apps

Magnolia's app framework was one of the attractions for Steinway. The apps approach to creating content gave Steinway a neat way of using structured pieces of data in its dealer and artist networks. Steinway started using Magnolia's REST APIs to import content from these two data sources as well as from its older sites. It was able to programmatically manipulate the data without any manual cut-and-paste.

One content app was used to dynamically construct the dealer page with a map. A second app was used to feature testimonials, photos and videos from more than 1,700 artists around the world who work with Steinway pianos. The app allows rich content to be structured in a logical way and provides the framework for these elements to be brought together to orchestrate an engaging experience for website visitors.

Magnolia provided excellent support throughout the implementation and any reported bugs were addressed quickly. This was crucial for a global but small company like Steinway, relying on a one-man IT department. Another plus point was Magnolia's stability—it worked without breaking and could handle traffic well.

The result

A flexible but stable site that can easily grow

Steinway's redesigned North American global site went live in February 2016—a modern, streamlined website that celebrates the musical experience. Steinway plans to re-deploy its dealer network site on Magnolia. It will gradually move from one site to having 30 or 40 sites within the same instance, using the stable and flexible features of Magnolia to showcase Steinway's tradition of masterful craftsmanship, passion and patience in creating the finest products.