

Magnolia helps \$7billion utility build its brand presence

Germany's biggest communal utility company, Stadtwerke München, uses Magnolia for its portal to enable greater user engagement, better communication and simpler content creation



Stadtwerke München

Industry

Public services

Country

Germany

Site

www.swm.de



Enabling greater user engagement and better communication

Stadtwerke München (SWM), named the “top local utility” in annual surveys, is one of Germany's biggest communal utility companies, with over one million customers and \$6.1 billion in annual revenues. It is 100 percent owned by the City of Munich, and its 8,000 employees provide customers with electricity, natural gas, drinking water, district heating and cooling, and public pools. Its infrastructure facilities include various renewable power plants, combined heat and power plants, cutting-edge telecommunication services with its optical fibre system, public transport with underground, bus and tram systems, and both indoor and outdoor pools as well as saunas.

The SWM portal is a primary channel in building its brand identity and communicating with customers. However, the old CMS had an unattractive customer interface and was difficult and time-consuming to work with. Magnolia enabled SWM to adopt a new marketing approach, with an attractive, easy-to-navigate site that reinforces its brand and messaging. Both developers and authors are impressed with Magnolia's rich feature set, support for best practices, and overall ease of use. Training and administrative costs have plummeted.

The challenge

Building closer relationships with customers

Because it's competing with private utilities, it's important for SWM to be able to engage its customers. Building a strong brand identity and communicating effectively with customers were its first priorities. However, its old proprietary CMS was simply not up to the challenge.

It had obsolete layouts that were difficult to update, as well as being unattractive and intimidating to users. It was difficult to customize the system, and the software did not comply with current web standards. The site really failed to project the dynamic, progressive, customer-friendly image that SWM wanted it to.

Making it easier to manage a growing web portal

The site was also difficult and time-consuming to manage. It needed two full-time administrators and content authors required at least one week of training, and regularly had to re-learn their tasks, or call the help desk.

The company wanted a web portal that would be easy to use, with a modern interactive design that included typical Web 2.0 features like RSS feeds and social media integration. Content authors had to be able to publish easily, without having to learn HTML or Java programming. The website also had to be scalable, secure and accessible, to cater to a growing base of over 1.1 million customers.

The solution

Open source

After evaluating various options, SWM chose Magnolia Community Edition for its initial portal relaunch. The company found that Magnolia integrated nicely with other third-party tools used to build their sites, such as the Google Web Toolkit for interactive web forms in the My SWM section of the site. Magnolia's open source code also provided greater flexibility and less restrictive licensing.

A fresh modern layout

A design agency provided a fresh modern layout, which SWM's in-house development team converted into Magnolia templates. Next, content authors took on the task of reviewing and modifying content from the existing site for transfer to the Magnolia system.

A smooth website relaunch

Within a few months, SWM's developers, IT staff and line departments had the system configured and they launched the new site. They found it surprisingly easy to customize Magnolia. The Standard Templating Kit (STK) allowed the developers and designers to separate matters of concern and work collaboratively to relaunch the site on a short

schedule. The activate/deactivate workflow feature and separate authoring instances made it easy to review new content before it went live.

The Magnolia Community Edition relaunch enabled SWM to connect with its customers through an attractive, easy-to-navigate site that reinforces its brand messaging. The subsequent Enterprise Edition relaunch enhanced the company's web branding through interactive channels with a simplified design and content layout.

Ease of use

Both developers and authors were impressed with Magnolia's rich feature set, support for best practices, and overall ease of use. Training and administrative costs have plummeted. Authors now find it easy to add and update content, thanks to Magnolia's intuitive web-based interface and rich out-of-the-box functionality.

The result



"My SWM" - citizens can log in

Positive feedback from all stakeholders

Visitors are now able to find and interact with content efficiently through features like pre-defined page layouts, readable URLs and out-of-the-box accessibility. Authors can update web content quickly while in-house developers can leverage their Java knowledge to build custom solutions on top of open standards, employing best-of-breed open source components. User-friendly tools and standardized STK templates have allowed SWM to save time and money, while also ensuring that multiple sites have consistent configuration, setup and usage.

The new SWM portal, built with Magnolia, fully addresses the goals of greater user engagement, better communication, simpler content creation and administration, and standards compliance. It has helped SWM to shorten its sales cycle and expand sales opportunities by communicating effectively with its customers while greatly enhancing its brand and value proposition.