

## **Portfolio**

We've been developing custom software applications for 20+ years, but here are just a few of our more recent website and marketing-related projects.

Most recently serving as North America Head of Marketing & Web Development for a \$4 billion global retail travel company, our past work has taken us through numerous industries and business models -- and provided a wealth of experience that we can extend to you.

Whether building new systems from the ground up, or enhancing existing systems, we've always approached each project and partnership with a forward-looking eye:

- using cutting-edge marketing strategies and tactics proven to boost sales & engagement
- providing a fulfilling, rewards-driven customer experience
- and by improving productivity with business automation

To accomplish this, there is as much – or <u>more</u> – going on *behind the scenes* of our work as there is at the front-end. What you get is MORE than what you see.

We have used online technology to acquire a 360-degree view of the customer to more clearly understand their needs and increase sales... we've given customers reasons to stay loyal so they keep coming back... and we've made our clients' lives easier so they can *do more* with *less effort*.

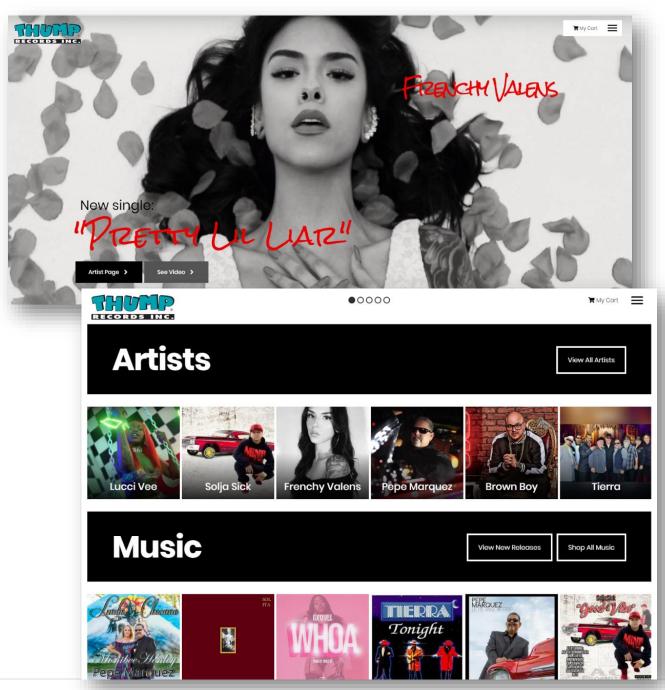
## Thump Records (Universal Music Group) - Website

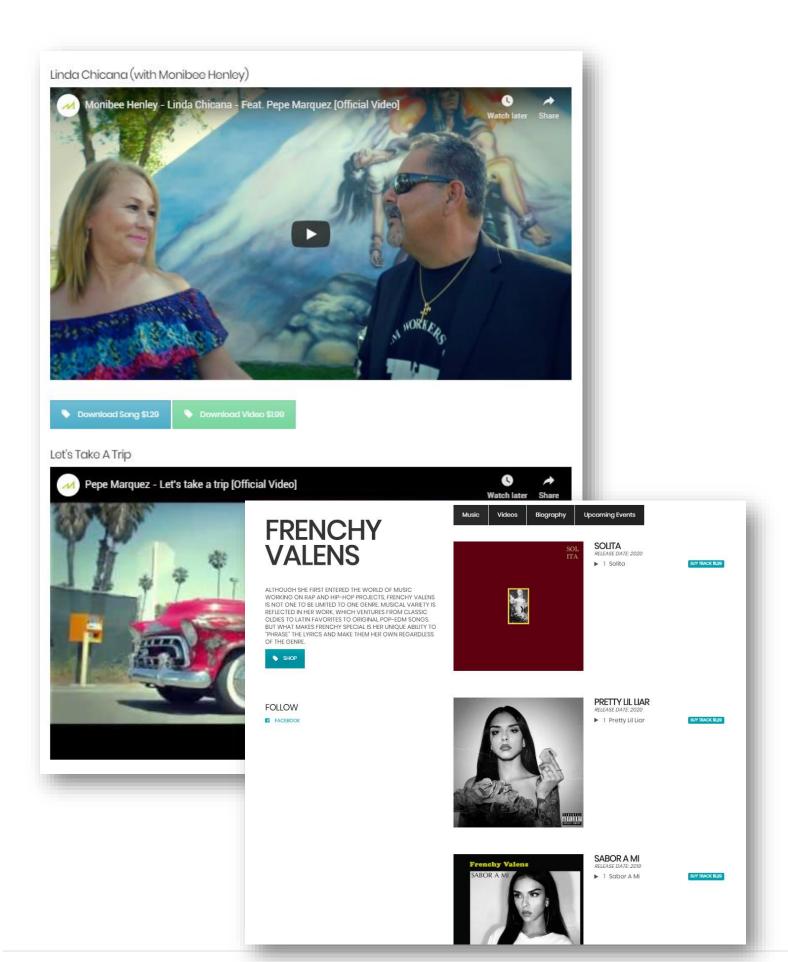
Here is a website we recently built for a record label under Universal Music Group we have a partnership with — **Thump Records**, in the music business since 1990. This is a good example of a full-scale e-commerce site where we built and continue to maintain everything from content to graphic art to e-commerce, with marketing automation running behind the scenes. As an overhaul to an older website, **the new website more than tripled web traffic and increased sales by over 300% in just the first month.** 

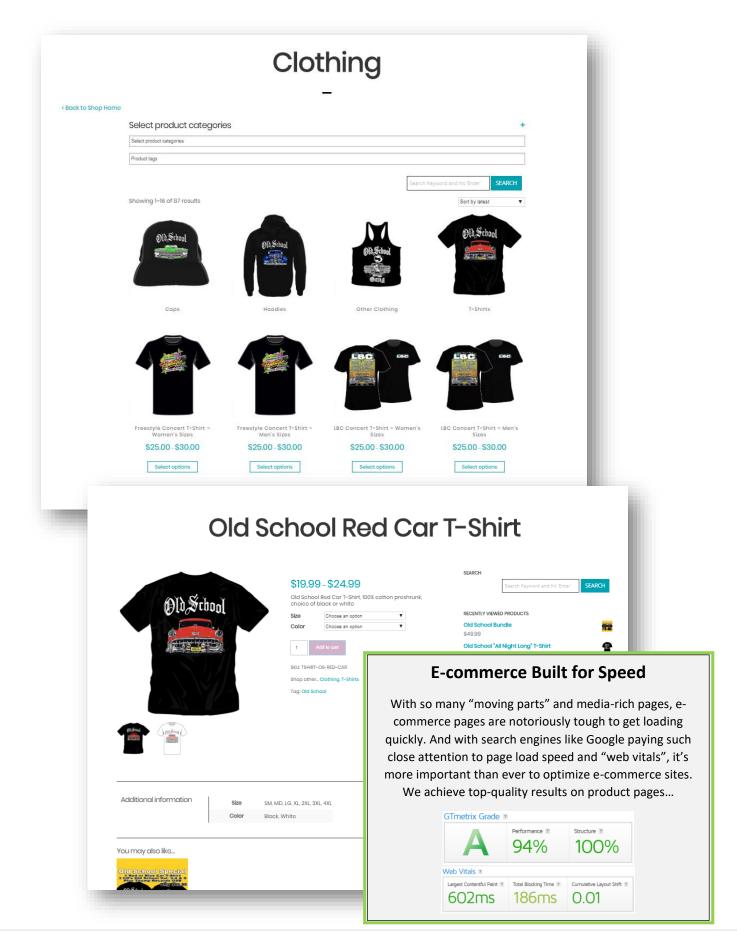


THE ORIGINAL

#### https://thumprecords.com









Instead of using third-party (pre-made) engagement & "gamification" tools, we build our own which gives us complete control over the branding, functionality and content to create something truly unique – tailored to the client's industry and market. This high level of customization gives our clients a considerable advantage.

The <u>Lowrider Wheel of Bling</u> popup (pictured above) is a perfect example of this. In exchange for the customer opting-in to receive marketing email communication, they can "spin to win" this animated wheel to get discounts and giveaways. The result is boosted sales, customer engagement, and <u>valuable</u> marketing permission!

Giveaways and discounts are purchase-dependent (i.e. "free oldies CD with a purchase") and we have full control over the probability of the customer landing on each prize. We also built a marketing automation system to send emails reminding customers to redeem their prizes before they expire.

Since introducing the <u>Lowrider Wheel of Bling</u> to ThumpRecords.com:

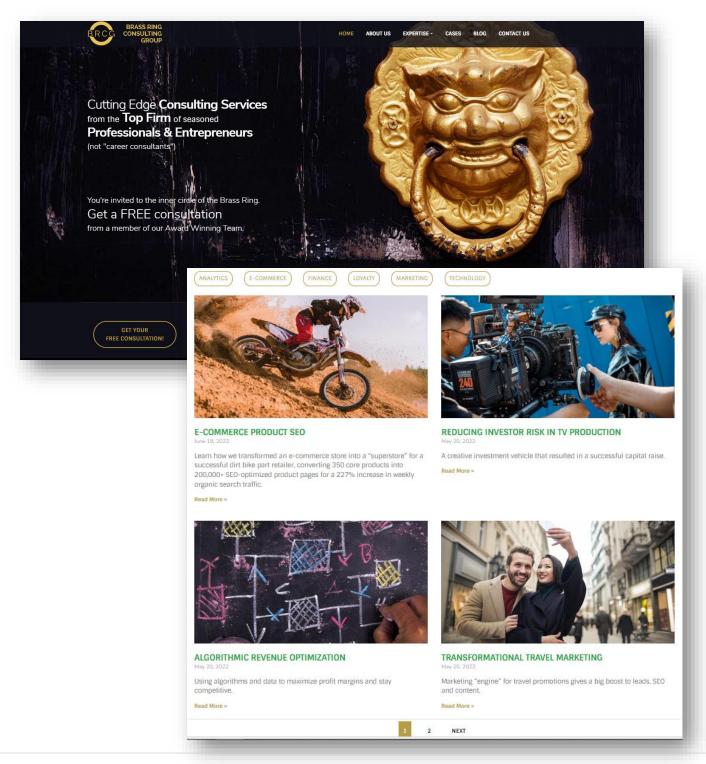
- Sales lifted over 55% in the first 30 days after implementation
- A <u>significant</u> marketing opt-in email list has been built and continues to grow (over 5,000 opt-in subscribers in the first year of deployment)
- The added engagement has resulted in a major SEO improvement for the website with bounce rates going from 45% to just 18%



## **Brass Ring Consulting Group Website**

This is our own website, which includes marketing automation features, appointment scheduling & payment processing, a blog and case studies. API integrations include Meta, Mailchimp, Amelia Scheduling. We've created various WordPress custom post types as well to better organize the content.

https://www.brassringconsult.com



Marketing today has become incredibly technology-oriented. To stand out from the crowd and hit your sales targets, you need a full-service Marketing Consultant partner who knows traditional marketing and brand-building <u>as well as</u> the very latest digital tools and strategies. That's where we come in.

Understanding what your market needs and creating a consistent brand identity across all channels of communication is critical. But that's just the start. In today's fast-paced digital world, your target market is a moving target. Success requires constant testing and tailoring your marketing message—down to the individual.

We act as your outsourced Marketing team (or an extension of your existing team) to create systems that transform your business by empowering you to truly know your customer. We also leverage our experience to work holistically, knowing that your marketing strategy needs to align with every aspect of your business—from product strategy to operations to finance.

- B2C and B2B
- Personalization, A/B Tests
- Digital & Print Advertising

- Competitive Analysis
- Loyalty, Affiliate & Referral
- Email Marketing Strategy

- Distribution Channels SEO, SEM & Analytics
- Marketing Automation
- PR, Social Media & Content
- Lead Nurturing & CRM Systems
- Direct Mail Campaigns

We've won numerous awards for our marketing work and built marketing platforms reaching over 22 million consumers. No job is too big or too small! How can we help you?





We knew we needed to hire strong, outside talent to help us manage our rapid growth as we were turning a little \$4\$ million travel agency into a \$325+ million travel management company with five lines of business. Brass Ring Consulting Group not only quickly redesigned and rebuilt our enterprise marketing strategy, but also had vision and skills across the entire organization... they could be relied upon to understand complex needs and execute plans to high standards that surpassed my expectations.

#### Joe McClure

President - Montrose Travel (now Corporate Travel Management)



#### **Highlighted Services**

#### Digital Marketing Services

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES.

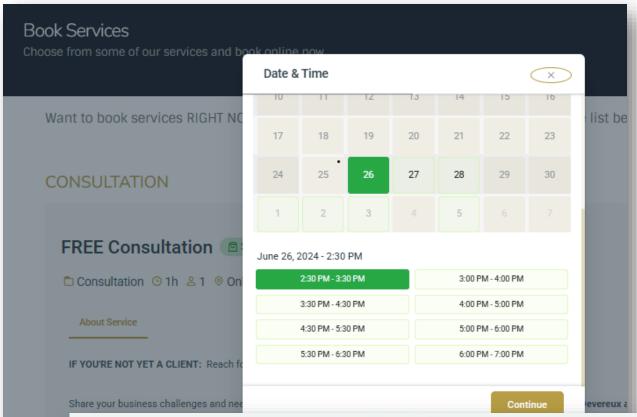
"Digital Marketing" combines several services in a customized way that fits your business -- it's not "one size

Read more...









#### From the blog...



#### **Guide to SEO Marketing Services**

MAY 20, 2022

What makes SEO marketing services effective? What does SEO stand for in marketing? What businesses does it work best for? Are there drawbacks to SEO? We answer questions like these.

Read More



#### What is Marketing Automation?

MAY 13, 2022

What is marketing automation and what can it do for you? Is your business ready for a marketing automation? What should you look for in a marketing automation platform? We answer these questions and more.

Read More



#### **Inbound vs Outbound Marketing**

MAY 6, 202

Inbound vs outbound marketing: what are the pros and cons of each, and how can both approaches be combined for better marketing?

Read More



#### 10 Top Components of a Business Plan to Lead You to Success

APRIL 29, 202

If you've never written a business plan before, what do you include to make it successful? Make sure to include these components of a business plan.

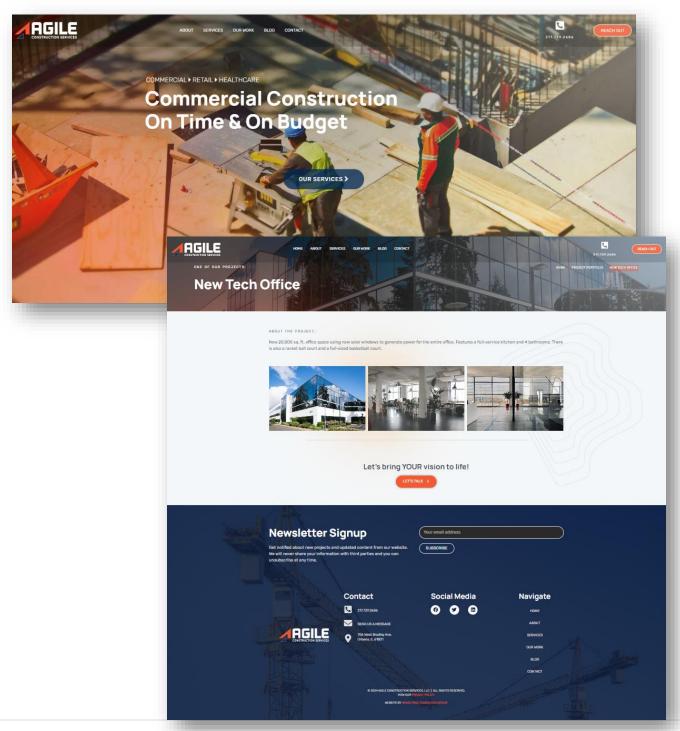
Read More



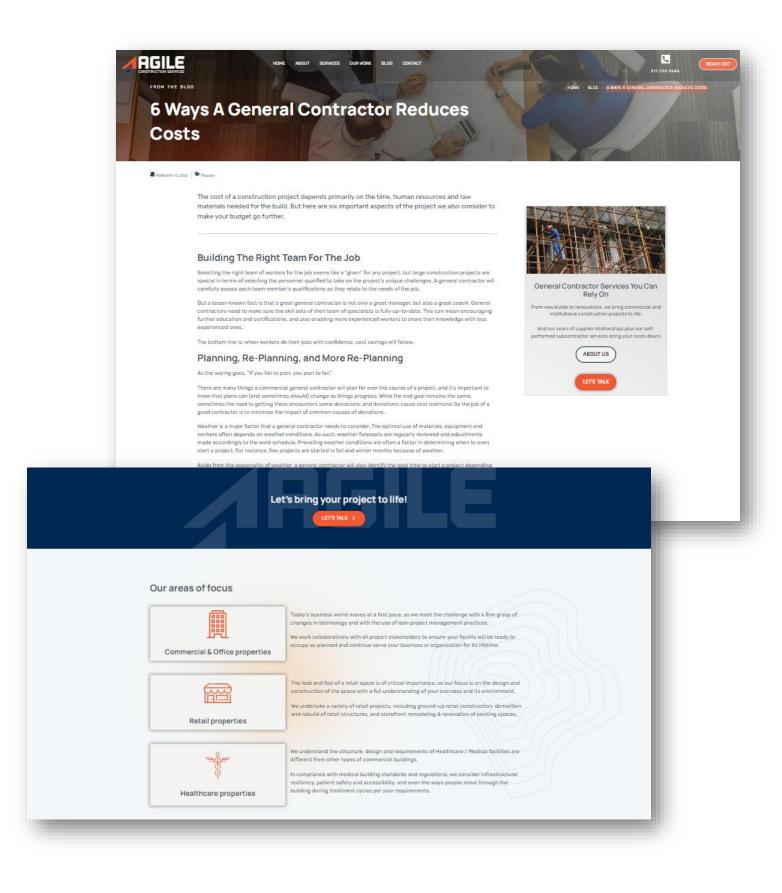
## Agile General Contractors Website

Agile General Contractors (<a href="https://agilegeneralcontractors.com">https://agilegeneralcontractors.com</a>) is a showcase website for a new Midwest general contractor firm.

**Note as of June 2024:** while the website is complete, the client has not yet provided content for team bios, project portfolio, testimonials, or any blog content beyond what we wrote (see <u>6 Ways A General Contractor Reduces Costs</u>). So, what you will see on the website includes a lot of placeholder content, but you will get a good idea of how the website looks and works.







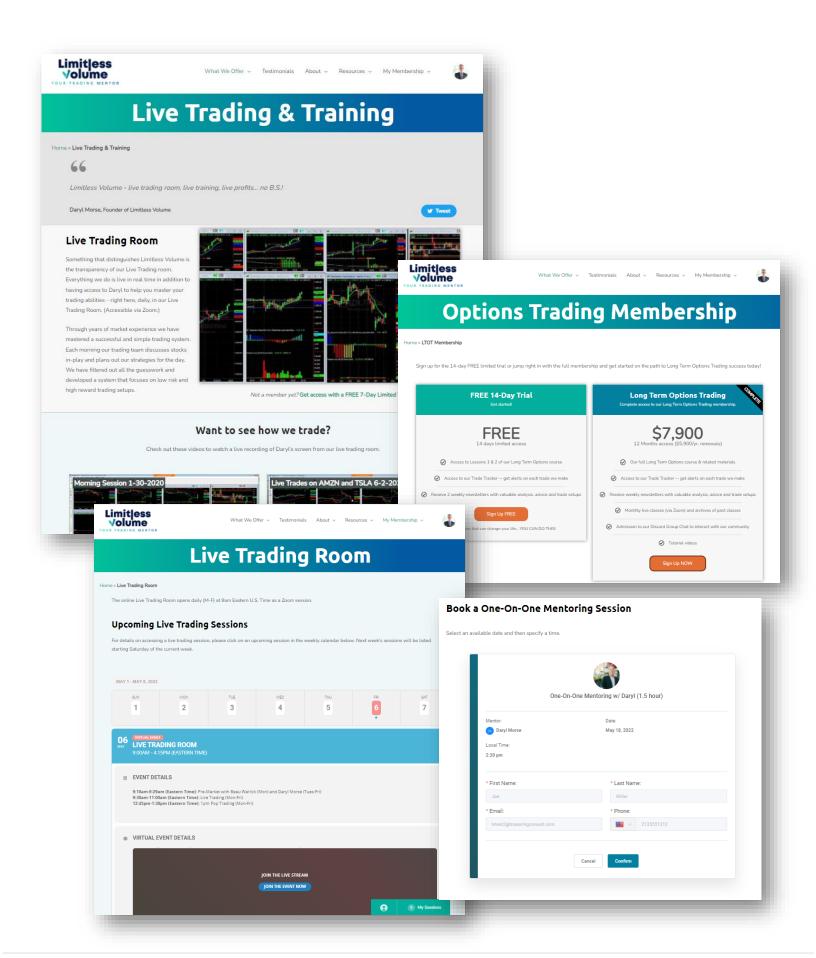
## Limitless Volume – Day Trading e-Learning Membership Website, Custom Branding, and Content

Limitless Volume (<a href="https://limitlessvolume.com">https://limitlessvolume.com</a>) is an e-learning and membership website for stock day traders led by day trading guru Daryl Morse. The new website grew the number of subscribers from 28 (old Wix website) to 168 – a 6x increase! The website features:

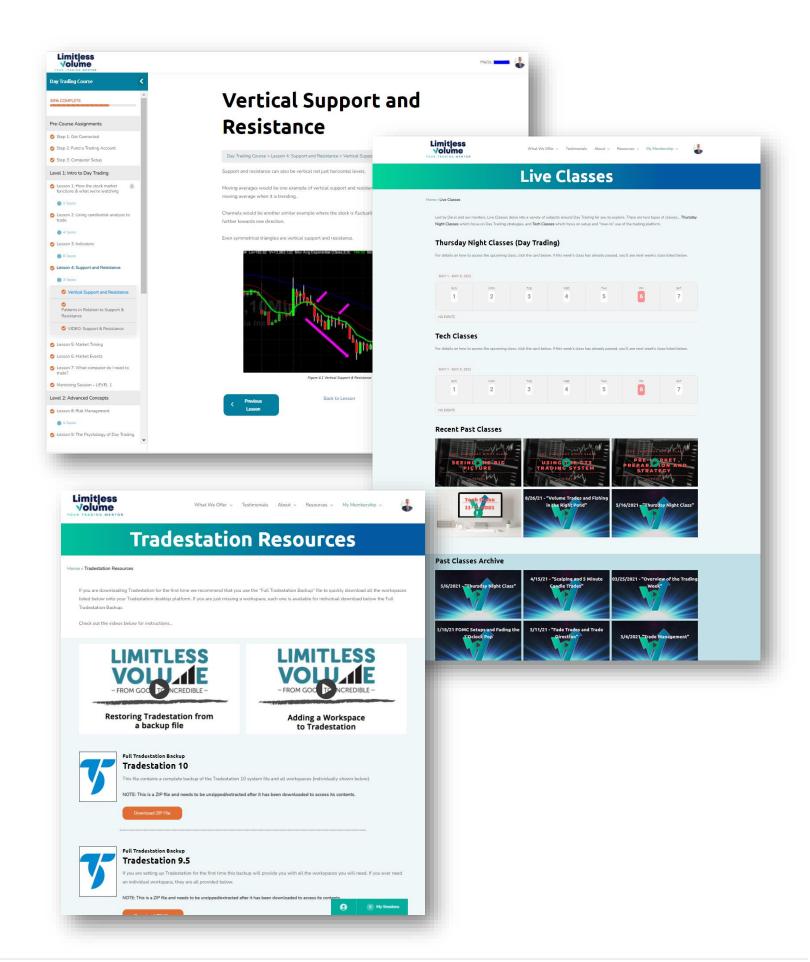
- Multiple membership options, including trial memberships
- Multiple online courses with text and instructional video as well as one-on-one live video mentorship as the student progresses
- Downloadable resources for members, including an e-book we created to induce prospective members to signup for a free trial membership
- The ability for students of certain membership types to schedule mentorship sessions with Daryl or others on Daryl's team with certain specializations (like tech support)
- Gated access to Daryl's daily live trading room (Zoom session), restricted to a specific membership level
- A "trade tracker" feature that alerts members of new trades as they're being made via SMS, device notifications and email, with an online portal for members to view current and past trade details
- Members have access to live (Zoom) classes and access to archived video of past classes.
- Private messaging between mentors and members
- Full integration with HubSpot CRM to track prospects and members alike.









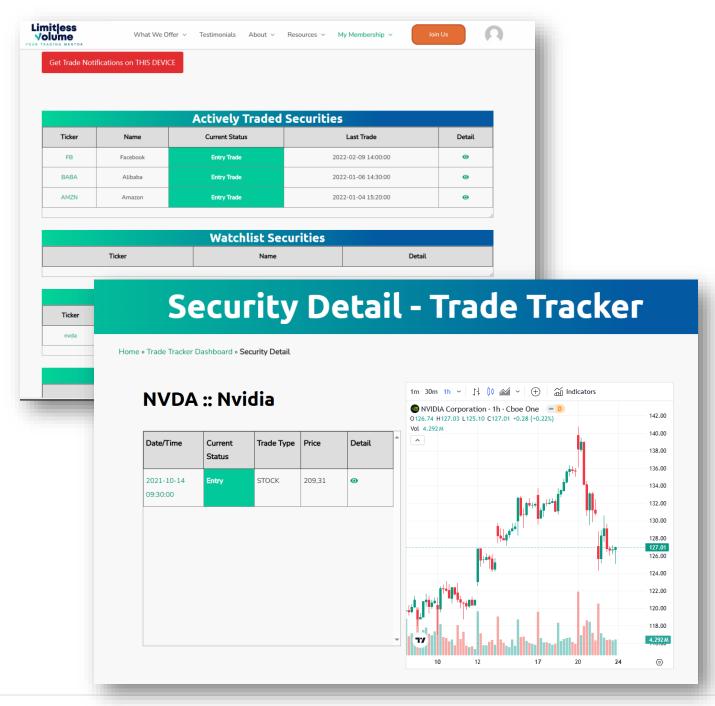




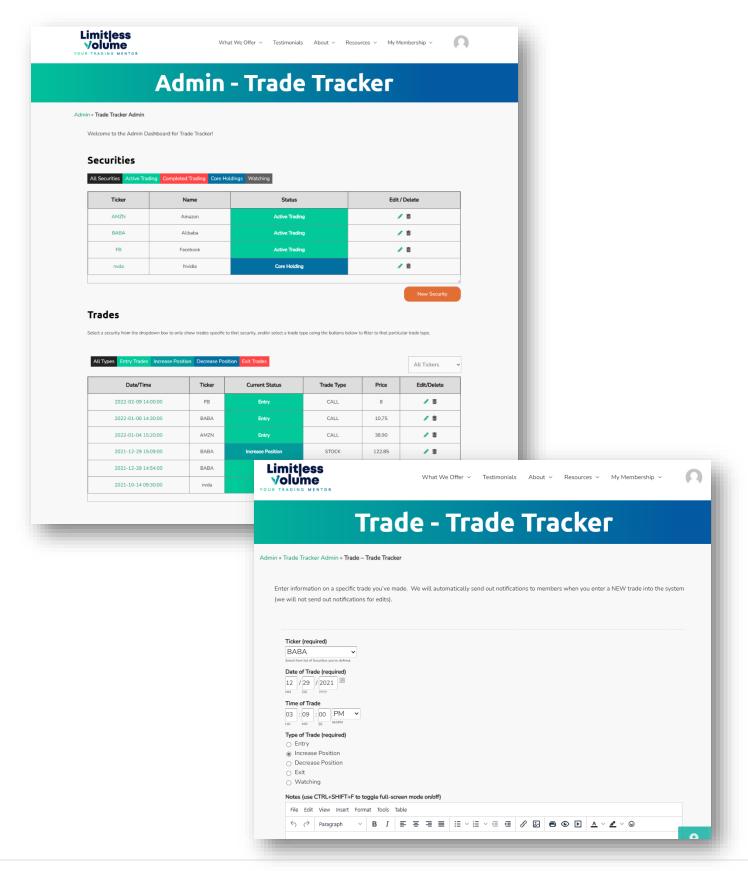
#### "Trade Tracker" Interface

A powerful aspect of the LimitlessVolume.com website is a special "Trade Tracker" tool we built just for the client. It's a custom-coded WordPress plugin with extensive front-end and back-end features.

A certain class of members has access to an ongoing record of Daryl Morse's current and past trades. And these members will never miss a trade opportunity if they registered their mobile or desktop devices to receive real-time trade alerts through this system. Our system sends these SMS, device notification, and email alerts whenever Daryl buys, sells, or changes his position in a particular stock or option, or when a particular stock is put on the "watchlist".



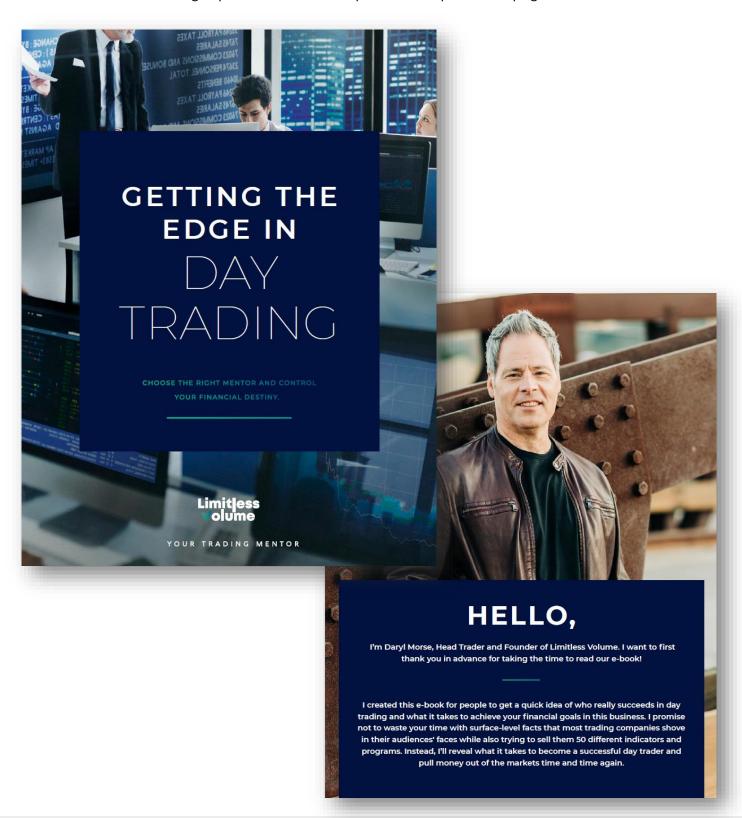
On Daryl's side, there is a full featured "admin" interface for recording his trades and positions in the form of a custom interface accessible from the WordPress admin backend.





## **Branding and Content**

To attract prospective members, we created an **e-book "Getting the Edge in Day Trading"** which is offered for download with the sign-up for a free membership trial via a drip email campaign.



## WHY BECOME A DAY TRADER?

There are many advantages for choosing day trading as a career. The biggest advantage is the financial freedom that comes with executing your trade strategy in a consistent way. You too can make profits each day of the market and shovel them into your bank account as you please, and you can scale-up your profits as you become more proficient.

Equally advantageous is the time freedom that day trading provides -- you choose when and where you want to trade. You will often hear traders in our room say that they have made their money within the first 30 minutes of trading, enabling them to carry on with living their best life for the rest of the day.

Of course, there are other benefits such as:

- Being your own boss, with no employees, inventory, or business overhead costs to worry about - just a computer and the internet!
- No continuing education... no professional liability... no licenses needed.
- Not affected by business shutdowns (such as those due to COVID-19).





## USING A RISK-FORWARD TRADING APPROACH

Lots of people ask me what my win-rate is in trading and I always tell them this is the wrong question to be asking. I don't mind answering as most weeks I do have above an 85% win-rate. But it's important to understand that with a risk-forward trading approach, your win-rate is mostly irrelevant. What they should be asking me is my average loss vs. my average gain.

With the trading system we use at Limitless Volume, we are always assessing our risk -- the total amount of money we could lose in any given trade -- before we enter each trade. We focus on finding situations ("setups") where a trade can produce us multiple times the amount of money we are risking.

For example, let's say I find a trading setup and I'm going to risk \$100 on it. I want to make sure that before I take this trade that the setup has the potential to make me 3 or 4 times the amount I'm risking or in other words a \$300-\$400+ dollar profit. This is what allows me to be able to take multiple losses and still come out very much ahead. Occasionally you will also get the home run too that will give you a nice 10x+ run. Even better is you can scale this approach to whatever size you would like to trade. If you want to make \$200 dollars per day or 6 figures per day, it's all possible.



Other examples of content we created include blog articles (no AI used!):

5 Reasons You Need A Day Trading Mentor (limitlessvolume.com)

How To Make Money As A Day Trader - Interview With Eric Kreager (limitlessvolume.com)

Risk Management in Stock Trading - Limitless Volume

Best Stock Indicators For Day Trading - Limitless Volume LLC

How To Grow A Day Trading Account - Limitless Volume LLC

Becoming a successful day trader - Limitless Volume LLC

## **Re-branding Limitless Volume**

We created a whole new branding look for Limitless Volume. Compare the old and new logos:





We also created a 3D motion graphic intro for instructional videos from Limitless Volume... see it here: <a href="https://youtu.be/AVeJcYAZzbg">https://youtu.be/AVeJcYAZzbg</a>

# Howard's House Cleaning -- Website, Custom Admin Features, Branding Video, Review Management, Local SEO

We completely rebuilt the website for **Howard's House Cleaning Referral Agency, Inc.** -- L.A. and Orange County's top-rated maid service, and **more than doubled their business**. Here's a great example of a *custom-built* WordPress site – no templates used – that's highly optimized for **speed and local SEO** without sacrificing things like fun animations, video and marketing features.

(Note: all the content – graphic design, video, website copy -- is our work, including most of the blog content.)

https://www.howardshousecleaning.com







## **Built for Speed...**

#### **GTMetrix performance - Services Page:**



Performance ? 95%

93%

Web Vitals 1

Largest Contentful Paint ?

97ms 1.1s

Total Blocking Time ?

Total Blocking Time ? Cumulative Layout Shift ?

#### **GTMetrix performance - SEO City Pages:**

GTmetrix Grade

Performance ?

Structure ? 97% Web Vitals 1

143ms 778ms

Largest Contentful Paint ?

Cumulative Lavout Shift ? 0.01

## **Branding Video**

Integrated into the website is a video we created about Howard's House Cleaning Referral Agency. You can see it by clicking on the image link here:

https://youtu.be/1luLzws1WjU

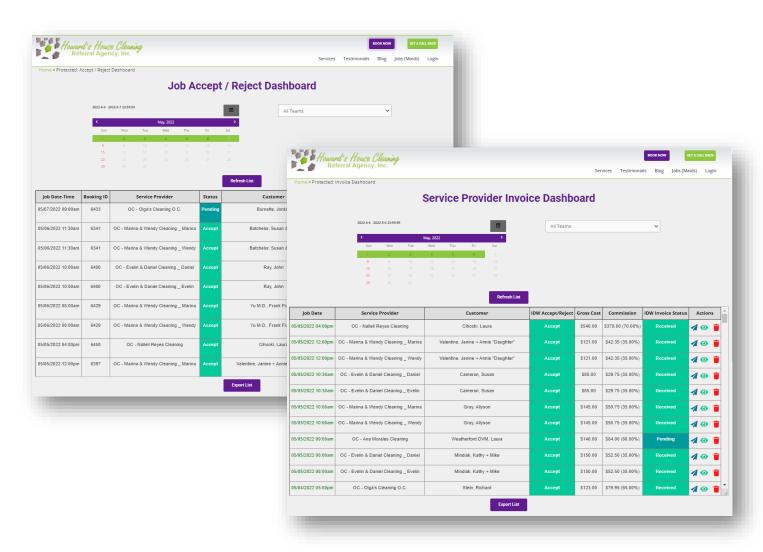




#### **Business Compliance Tools**

Since the business is a referral agency whose cleaning crews are independent contractors, there are **governmental compliance rules** that require the business to maintain specific records of work offered to and performed by those independent contractors. For example, a whole series of documents and agreements need to be in place and signed prior to the contractor beginning work. And then, acceptance or rejection of jobs offered to contractors must be recorded, as well as invoices for those jobs received from the contractors.

So, we built a comprehensive system that automated and streamlined the onboarding documentation process, and then automated the job acceptance/rejection and invoicing processes while maintaining historical records of everything needed for compliance. Records can be exported to Microsoft Excel for archival purposes. Emails to contractors for compliance purposes are automatically sent daily at specific times but can also be re-sent manually by the business operator. These functions are hidden behind a password-protected part of the website.



The system integrates via API with the service booking platform **Launch27** to synchronize upcoming jobs and completed jobs, work team assignments, commission rates, job cost totals, client information, etc.



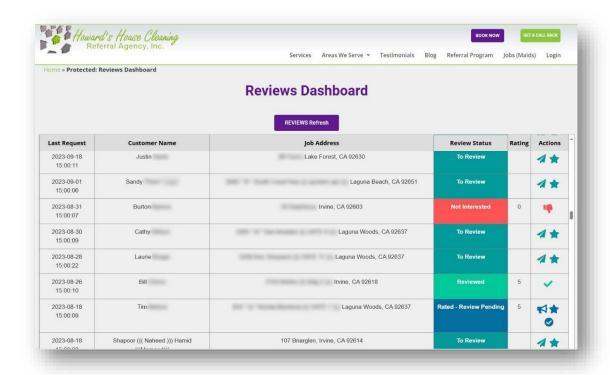
#### **Reviews Management**

Yet another aspect of the website is the **Reviews Management** feature.

The business operates from several geographic zones around the U.S., each with its own unique Google Business profile. For local SEO, it's important that clients leave reviews under the business profile for their geographic area.

So, we built a database-driven review management system that automates the process of requesting reviews from clients, guides them to the appropriate Google profile depending on their geographic zone, and makes it easy for the business owner to track ratings and feedback to improve service. guides clients to the proper Google profile under which to leave their review.

The business owner has a password-protected dashboard to manage and track client reviews:



Here the business owner can see the "Review Status" column to see the status of each client:

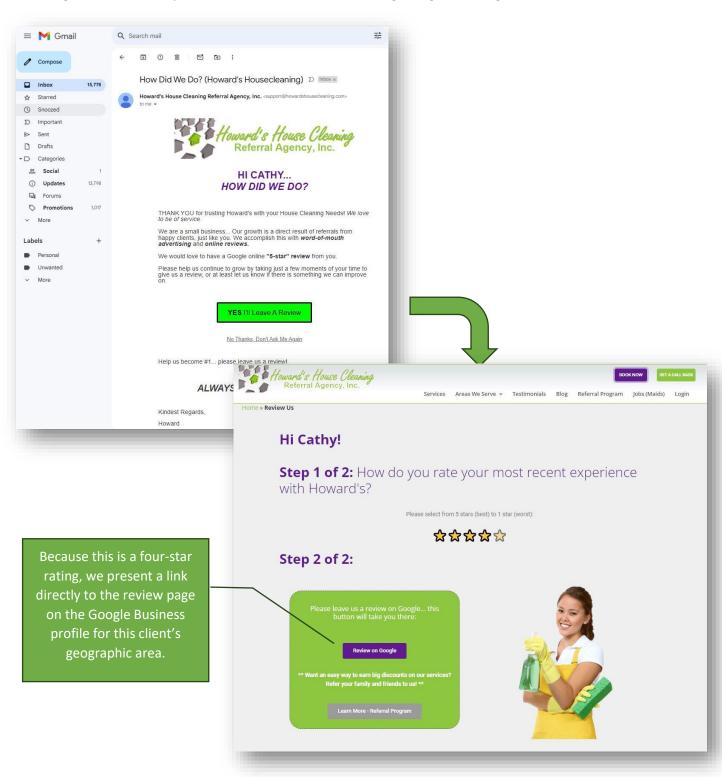
- Whether they have not yet initiated the review process
- If they have initiated but not yet completed their review
- If they're just not interested in reviewing (if so, they won't be prompted to do so in the future)
- If they have completed their review on Google.

The owner can also click/tap icons in the "Actions" column to take specific manual actions:

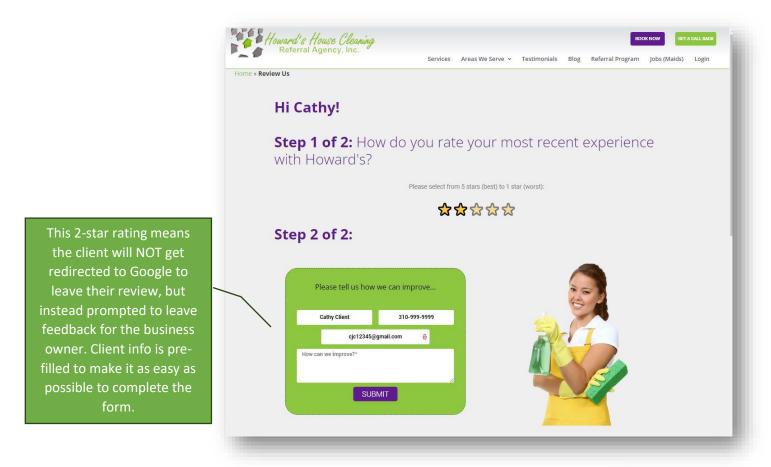
- Send out an email prompting a client to initiate a review of the work just performed.
- Send out an email reminding someone who started the process to finish it.
- Send out an email with a quick link to their local Google Business profile to leave their review



And of course, clients need to be prompted to leave reviews immediately following work performed. Once a job is complete, an automated email goes out to the client prompting them to review the work performed. A graphic button in the email leads the client to the review page on the business's website – not Google – where they leave their review and any comments. (The client can also indicate if they are not interested in leaving a review and they will not receive communications regarding reviews again.)

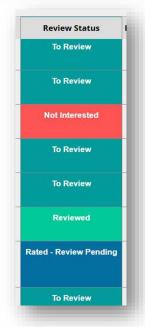


But not every review *should* make it into the Google review system – we want the good ones! So, if the review is 4- or 5-stars, the client be redirected to the appropriate Google Business profile for their geographic area. But if the review is less than 4-stars, the business owner will receive the client's feedback directly via email and the client will not be redirected to Google to leave their review there.



Since we can't know when or if the client leaves their review on Google, we record the status of the review as pending for the business owner to check the Google profile for the review. It's easy to see the status instantly on the admin dashboard, so the owner quickly knows which clients to follow-up with for their review.

If the owner hasn't seen the review on Google within a few days of when the client initiated the review process, he can trigger a reminder email to the client to finish the review process, all from the review admin dashboard; if he sees the review has indeed been left on Google, he can mark the review process as complete for that client.





#### Local SEO

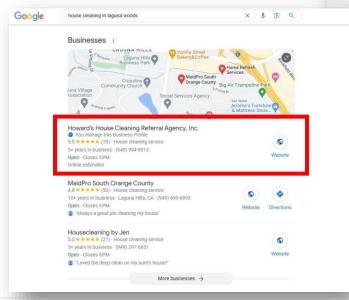
When we started working with Howard's House Cleaning Referral Agency, the company had one location and service area. Today, the company operates in 9 major metropolitan areas from California, to Texas, to Tennessee!

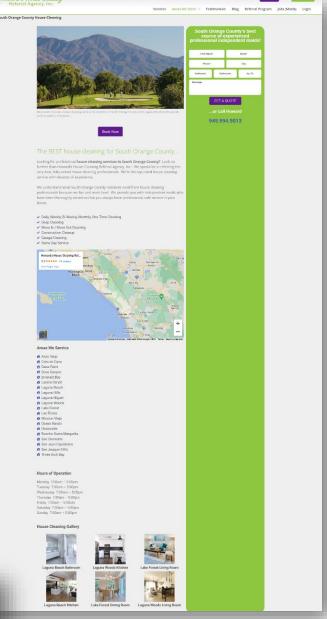
Service businesses like this are particularly dependent on strong Local SEO for growth. We not only built the necessary elements to support Local SEO on the website, but also built-out and maintained the elements that go beyond the website: "NAP" consistency (name, address, place), the Google Business Profiles for each region, review management, and local directory listings.

On the website, we built unique, "city" and "region" pages, each optimized for local keywords (such as "house cleaning in Laguna Woods") with all the other elements needed for good Local SEO. "Internal links" on the website are provided by the top navigation menu and by links in the footer of each page.

City and Region pages feature request forms, Google reviews (via API from Google Business Profiles), unique phone numbers for each region, maps, geotagged images and more.

The result? Prominent placement in the coveted Google "local pack".







## Wells Fargo Go Far Rewards Travel – Website Features, Personalized Marketing, Gamification, Algorithmic Pricing

Accessible to 12 million Wells Fargo cardholders, the Go Far Rewards program offered the ability to earn points for purchases and redeem them for travel (among other things). We led the development team that built the Travel portion of the rewards program, accounting for approximately \$100 million in annual purchases of flights, car rentals, hotel stays, cruises and vacation packages.

Following is some of the web development projects and marketing-oriented features we personally built.

We laid out our objectives in stages, leading from the merchandising of travel deals to ultimately personalizing the e-commerce experience and algorithmically pricing hotel rates. **This was successful on every level:** 

- 80.1% increase in travel product engagement
- Lift in transaction volume of 105% for cruises and 74% for vacation packages
- 32.7% increase in the number of completed hotel bookings while maintaining market price competitiveness without impact to profit margins
- Acquisition of valuable first-party customer data travel preferences and search history -- from hundreds of thousands of cardholders, enabling us to offer personalized travel recommendations



#### **Travel Offers**

**OBJECTIVE:** Engage cardholders and provide value with travel offers for vacations and cruises.

**HOW:** Merchandising of dynamic travel offers fed via API from a custom-made CMS.

Offers were sourced from the many cruise lines and vacation wholesalers we worked closely with, and fresh content was updated weekly. All the Marketing team had to do was input the content into the CMS!

We created a unique custom marketing content management system (mCMS) to input all details related to the offer, including offer copy, terms & conditions, images, listing priority, "featured" status, etc. Our mCMS also provided the ability to "tag" each travel offer to accommodate different styles of travelers – from luxury travelers, to adventure seekers, to cultural explorers, to family travel and a number of other travel "cohort" groups. (This would later enable us to serve relevant travel recommendations once we learned more about each user... read on for more).

Finaly, the mCMS system included its own API which allowed us to pull content into the Wells Fargo Rewards travel website, as well as a number of other domains and other loyalty programs our team built -- such as the travel loyalty programs for PNC Bank, State Farm, First National Bank of Omaha,

Go Far Rewards

So Far Rewards

Learn

Treved Meen: Fights: Hadde: Car reveals: Course: Vacations: Course gent getween Constitute: Treved offers

Punta Cana All-Inclusive Deals

Learn more

Select your travel offer:

Filter by: Reservation

Learn more

Learn

and the CUrewards VISA rewards program for hundreds of credit unions across the U.S.



#### **Hotel Deals**

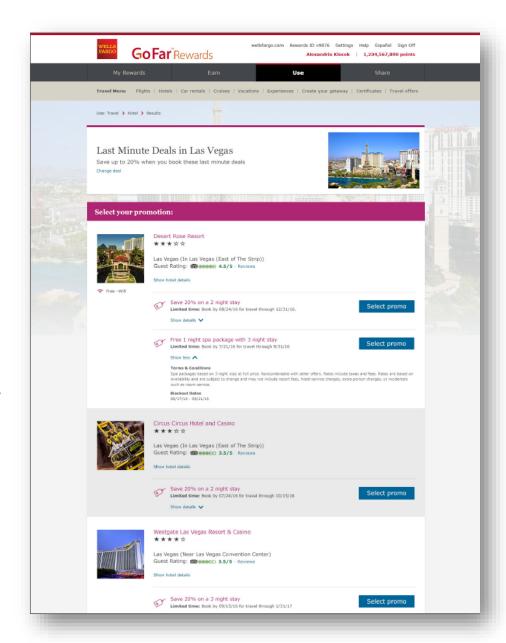
**OBJECTIVE:** Engage cardholders and provide value with "themed" pages of the latest hotel deals -- for example, "Last Minute Deals in Las Vegas" or "Family Summer Vacation Deals in Orlando".

HOW: We connected with Expedia's Hotel Deals API to automatically pull real-time hotel offers based on the criteria specific to the "themed" page -- for example, "Last Minute Deals in Las Vegas" would query the Expedia API for travel offers to the destination "Las Vegas", and for "last minute" travel dates within the next two weeks.

We extended our mCMS system to capture the specific criteria for each of these pages, and then a simple call to our mCMS API would return JSON data to be used in dynamically generating the user-facing pages in real-time, with the very latest hotel offers.

Offers would "click through" to the general hotel booking engine where the user could complete their online booking.

These offers were also "tagged" to specific travel "cohort" groups like the vacation and cruise deals described on the previous page, in preparation for our upcoming "personalized recommendations" objective.

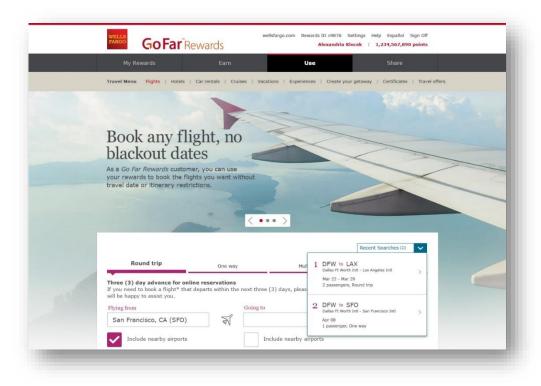


#### **Recent Searches**

**OBJECTIVE:** Enhance the user experience and reduce "friction" in the shopping experience by allowing cardholders to store and recall their most recent travel product searches, for flights, hotel stays, and car rentals.

**HOW:** Since each logged-in cardholder is unique and identified by their cardholder ID, we could store encrypted first-party data about the cardholder in our Customer Data Platform and give the user the ability to recall recent searches.

**RESULTS:** Not only did we see an immediate increase in product engagement (the number of product searches performed by users), but this feature served a deeper purpose as part of our longer-term objectives. We would later use this information from a customer's searches to understand – on the unique USER LEVEL -- more about their travel plans, preferences and interests. For example, knowing a user's flight destination would enable us to later recommend hotels and car



rentals at the destination... knowing whether they were traveling with others, and their ages (adults, children, seniors?), would also give insight into whether they were traveling solo, as a couple, or as a family – further enabling us to offer more personalized travel product recommendations.

### **Traveler Profiles**

**OBJECTIVE:** give users the create "profiles" to store and recall personal information for themselves and others they travel with. This would then be used to pre-fill complex flight booking forms with such information as Passport numbers, Driver's License/IDs, date of birth, address, frequent flyer account numbers, etc.

**HOW:** This was another feature we built which was essentially an extension of the Recent Searches "data storage and recall" system. **The impact on the user experience was particularly positive for mobile users, who commonly struggle with filling out long forms.** 



#### Personalized Travel Recommendations

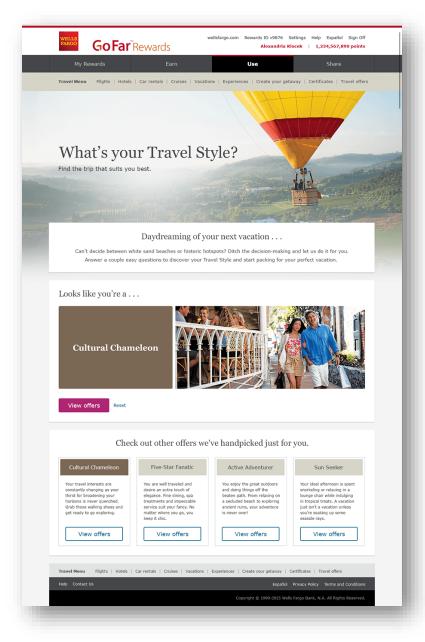
**OBJECTIVE:** present users with personalized travel recommendations based on what we know about them.

**HOW:** Here again we extended the use of the Customer Data Platform to serve personalized travel recommendations based on past interactions with the website. For example, if a user had previously searched for a hotel stay and specified "two adults and two children" we could serve that user deals for family-friendly activities and destinations.

To gather even more detail about a user's travel preferences and style, we created a fun "gamification" tool to allow the user to discover their travel style. This presented a series of questions intended to segment the user into one of several "cohort" styles – luxury traveler, adventure seeker, cultural explorer, etc. Knowing that, we could then instantly serve relevant travel recommendations, and present new recommendations every time the user logged in.

To promote the use of this "gamification" tool, we worked with the Wells Fargo Card Services marketing team on a series of email and direct mail messaging to cardholders.

**RESULTS:** We acquired a significant amount of valuable data previously not known about the bank's cardholders. **Over 10% of the user base participated in the Travel Styles** 



campaign. Using this data in conjunction with the "Bonus Points" campaigns (see next page), we achieved an 80.1% increase in product engagement, and a lift in transaction volume of 105% for cruises and 74% for vacation packages.

This feature won the <u>Travel Weekly</u> Magellan Silver award for Best Marketing Campaign, one of the highest awards in the travel industry.



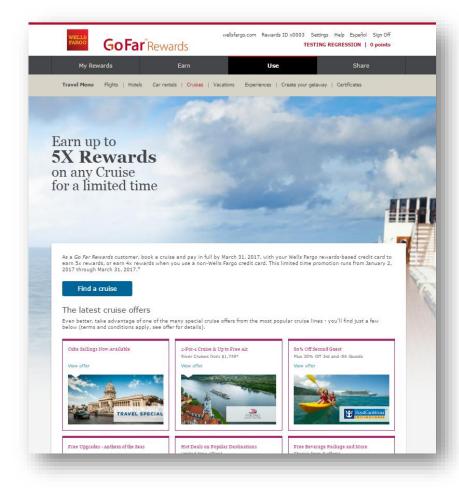
#### "Bonus Points" Promotions

**OBJECTIVE:** Incentivize cardholders to purchase their travel through the rewards platform instead of through external vendors (such as Expedia, Orbitz, Priceline etc.)

**HOW:** We further extended the capabilities of our proprietary mCMS system to allow the team to create timebound "bonus points" campaigns. These campaigns could be applied to certain types of products (for example, "5x points on CRUISES") or even for specific individual products ("5x points when you book a stay at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas").

To present these offers, we would highlight them on their respective product "home" pages (for example, the "Cruises" home page in the screenshot below). We also worked closely with the Wells Fargo Card Service Marketing team to message cardholders about larger quarterly campaigns.

In addition to this messaging, applicable products in the booking engine would show tags promoting the offer... for example, after performing a search for



cruises, the search results for which a "5x points" promotion applied would indicate "Earn 5x points on purchase" in their listing and throughout the stages of the booking process.

If a cardholder chose to book their travel by phone through the call center versus using the website, they too would get notified of the offer. We integrated the messaging from our mCMS API into the call center application so agents could inform the caller about the special points offer while working with them on their booking by phone.

The "Bonus Points" campaigns were a huge success, especially when coupled with our ability to better understand the travel preferences of many cardholders (see "Personalized Travel Recommendations" on the previous page). When we introduced these campaigns, we saw an **80.1% increase in product engagement** (search and browse activity) and, most importantly, a clear lift in transaction volume for the products – **sales of cruises were up 105% and vacation packages up 74%**.



## Algorithmic Hotel Pricing

**OBJECTIVE:** Increase hotel booking transactions by competitively optimizing our pricing with real-world money vs. our pricing with points... and make a healthy profit in the process.

**HOW:** Giving away bonus points is a great tool for stimulating sales, but not at the expense of profit margins! Cruises and Vacation packages already have higher margins compared to flights and hotel bookings. Awarding bonus points for cruises and vacations had a very minor impact on overall margins. However, the same could not be said about hotel stays or flights, where margins are often very slim.

Hotel bookings were one area we saw the opportunity to only optimize margins, but also increase bookings with competitive pricing and the offer of bonus points. Instead of opting for a static pricing model, we created a proprietary algorithm to dynamically adjust pricing in real-time.

In the world of rewards programs, many are limited to "point redemption" transactions only. However, with 12 million cardholders being served, we saw an enormous opportunity for incremental revenue from direct credit card purchases of travel, or from split-tender sales (part point redemption, part credit card sale). *The primary reason for offering bonus points was to stimulate direct, non-point purchases.* 

This dual world of "points" and "purchases" creates a more complex array of levers to optimize margins, compared to ordinary e-commerce platforms which don't include a "loyalty points" program. For example, when redeeming reward points (earned from everyday non-travel use of the card), we eliminate the merchant processing fees incurred by a credit card sale – this *helps* margins. On the other hand, awarding bonus points for a credit card purchase *while incurring the merchant fees for the sale* obviously *hurts* margins.

We started by defining "competitive pricing". We built a system to rapidly "scrape" pricing of hundreds of thousands of hotel room rates from online competitors, then mapped this data against our own vendor pricing data. This gave us valuable data on where the competitors had a price advantage -- or the opposite, where they had higher prices than ours – and helped us understand more specifically what "levers" we should adjust to maintain price competitiveness.

Armed with this knowledge, we then built a real-time algorithm for hotel pricing that factored in:

- Markup of pricing to achieve a certain minimum profit margin
- Selection of pricing from multiple inventory sources, some offering a set commission rate and others offering wholesale prices we could mark-up at our discretion
- Capping the fiat currency price markup not to exceed a level beyond "competitive"
- Reducing the "points redemption" price to ultra-competitive levels by factoring in the elimination of merchant
  processing fees for point redemptions, and factoring in the cost of bonus points and merchant fees for nonpoint purchases.
- Constant monitoring of the sales funnel to ensure conversion rate were not negatively impacted (the
  percentage of users who complete the transaction)

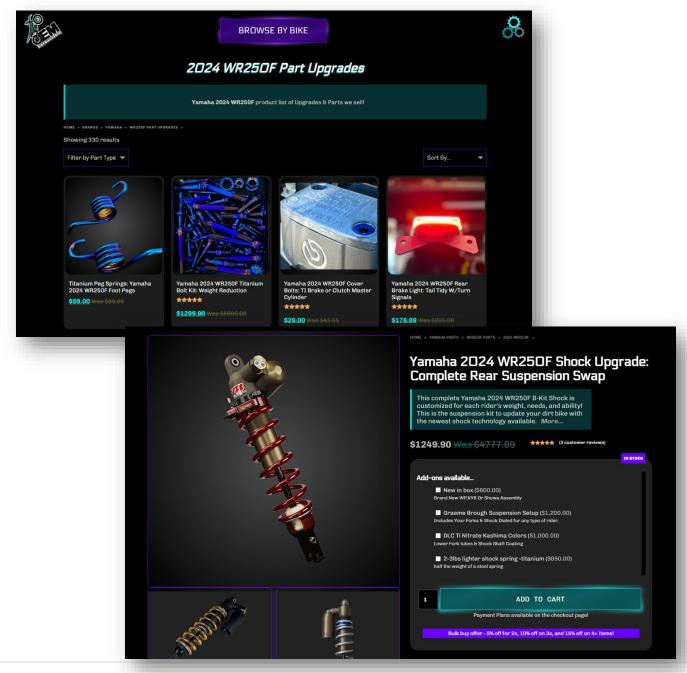
**RESULTS:** We first applied our algorithm against our competitors' price data to see if we remained competitive – we did! So, then we went live. Compared to the static pricing model, the result of the algorithmic pricing model was a 32.7% increase in the number of completed transactions while maintaining the company's target profit margin.



# OEM Dirt Bike Parts – E-Commerce Transformation, SEO, User Experience, Gamification, Personalization

OEM Dirt Bike Parts (<a href="https://oemdirtbikeparts.com">https://oemdirtbikeparts.com</a>) is an online retailer of hard-to-find parts for dirt bikes and ATVs.

In addition to an ongoing website redesign (as of June 2024), we built several front-end and back-end enhancements to improve the user experience, transform this WooCommerce store from 450 products to over 590,000 products, and build a unique "marketing engine" for the company which enables a high degree of personalization in marketing communications. We captured over 5,500 opt-in email subscribers in less than one year, increased organic search engine traffic by 227%, and grew sales 326%.





## The Challenge

Typically, it's relatively simple to classify an online store's products in a way that's easy for search engines like Google or Bing to understand. But what about when a product has 10, 100, or 5,000 variations that should each be considered unique products? That's where "simple" becomes "complex."

This client's store is not the typical e-commerce store. Our client has just over 450 core OEM parts that each fit many vendors and models when our client's custom modifications are introduced. Some parts may fit hundreds of bike make-model-years... other parts may fit thousands of bike make-models-years... and some parts may fit just a few bikes. In the end, there are 590,000+ "variation products" in the store, each fitting a particular bike make and model.

Making sure Google understands that each of these are *unique products* and not "duplicate content" is a huge undertaking. And making sure Google properly lists each unique product is critical for the business.

First, consider the broad range of bike vendors and models -- from the Honda CR125R to the Yamaha YZ450F to the Kawasaki KX250 to the KTM 300, limited edition models, and <u>hundreds</u> of other vendors and models.

Then consider that each vendor and model have variations specific to years, sometimes ranging across decades. For example, the Honda CR125R bike was in production from 1998 to 2007, and part fitment from one year to another can vary.

Now, put the hundreds of bike vendors and models against 10 or more years of production, and you easily have a list of vendor-model-years that consists of thousands of bikes.

So, one problem relates to the user experience. Without an effective part lookup interface, searching for the right set of bolts to mount the carburetor on a 2001 Honda CR125R can be quite challenging.

Another problem is, if we want Google to understand that a part should appear in search results for, say, 5,000 different bike variations... and if we want the search results to reflect the SPECIFIC make-model-year of the bike rather than something generic sounding... then typically we'd need to create 5,000 individual products, each titled and described to reflect the specific makes, models and years they fit. Once again, when someone searches Google for a "Front Brake Assembly for my 2002 Honda CR125R", we want Google to deliver a link to a product page SPECIFICALLY for a "2002 Honda CR125R Front Brake Assembly", and not the part for the 2003, 2004 or 2005 model... or for another bike entirely -- even if the part also fits their bike.

In the end, multiplying the number of products, by the number of vendors, by the number of models, by the number of years resulted in over 590,000 individual product variations!

Having a catalog of 590,000+ products is not feasible on many levels.

First, there is the issue of *inventory control*. Since a given part may fit thousands of individual bikes, it would be difficult if not impossible to synchronize inventory counts across thousands of "versions" of that part -- each being individual products in the catalog.

Second, such a large catalog could also create performance bottlenecks for the website that make for a poor user experience.



## **Overcoming Limitations**

When it comes to e-commerce power, flexibility and the ability to be customized, the **WooCommerce** platform will perform very well "out of the box" for most smaller online stores. But it does have limitations. Fortunately, custom web development can overcome those limitations.

For example, when you consider this particular case, you have just 450 products -- that's a relatively small store for WooCommerce, and very easily managed with no impact to performance (website speed etc.). But when you start assigning 5,000 product categories to many of the products, performance starts to suffer. And in the world of e-commerce, sales are lost when pages take too long to load!

In this case, the best approach was to create a product category for each of the 5,000+ bikes for which there were parts. Then, we'd assign the relevant categories to each product depending on which bikes the product would fit. That made it easier to find the right part to fit your 2002 Honda CR125R bike... as simple as querying "show me parts assigned to the category 2002 Honda CR125R".

But having this many category assignments to products in the WooCommerce system naturally has a negative impact on performance -- it's just how WooCommerce and WordPress are built.

To illustrate, web developers will note how WooCommerce builds the HTML for the listings on the Shop and Product pages – it includes CSS classes for *each and every* product category assigned to *each and every* product listed. With thousands of categories assigned to products listed on a page, that makes for a gigantic page in the browser!

On the server side, the server would be struggling to handle massive database queries to build these massive HTML pages, resulting in a slow and almost unusable experience for the end-users.

No matter how many powerful server resources could be thrown at the website, many pages would just NEVER load quickly. "Page caching" is usually at least a partial solution, but even trying to cache these enormous pages was challenging -- the caching system would often exceed the server resources and quit before the website could be fully cached!

The way around these performance issues involved deep customization:

- (a) "rewiring" the ways WooCommerce queries the database,
- (b) introducing indexing and product lookup systems outside of the standard WooCommerce platform,
- (c) completely rewriting key aspects of how WooCommerce works, such as how the Shop / Product Archive (Category) pages are built, and
- (d) integrating aggressive page caching (Litespeed Cache and QUIC.cloud CDN optimization) and use of object caching (Redis Cache).

So, with performance issues under control, the bigger issue remained to be solved... how do we turn 450 products into 590,000+ individual, SEO-optimized product pages for Google to index and serve?

WooCommerce does have a "product variation" feature, but it's not suitable for this particular case. Sure, it's great when you have t-shirts in Black, White and Navy Blue, and in sizes from Small to 4XL. You would just assign product variations to your "parent" t-shirt product.



But in this case, you simply can't have 5,000 different product variations (bike models) on a parent product. Imagine the end user having to scroll through thousands of variations to select the appropriate one for their order! And even if you could somehow create a usable interface for selecting the right variation, none of those product variations would appear to Google as unique, SEO-optimized product pages. Instead, all WooCommerce variations appear only under the page of the single parent product.

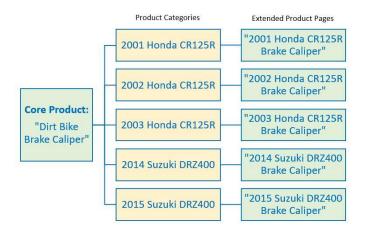
For a store selling different color t-shirts, that's good enough. For this store, good enough is not good at all!

## The Solution - Dynamically Generated Product Pages

To make each and every one of the 590,000+ product variations appear as standalone, SEO-optimized product pages, we built a custom extension of WooCommerce to dynamically generate individual product variation pages.

- Each product variation page has its own unique SEO-friendly URL.
- The content of each page is based on a template, but either dynamically "injected" with content specific to the bike vendor-model-year, or the template is overridden with content written specifically for the product variation by the store owner.
- Price and product image could be set for each variation as well (or the default product price and image would be used).
- Extensive SEO optimization of the page content ensured that each individual variation page would be
  recognized by search engines as its own standalone page to avoid "duplicate content" issues with SEO. This
  includes product-specific alt/title tags on images, image URLs that reflect the product variation, productspecific H1 and H2 tags, page metadata, reviews and much more -- everything that would go into a properly
  optimized e-commerce product page.
- Each page includes unique product and breadcrumb "schema" (JSON-LD structured data) to make the page easier for search engines to understand, and also encourages search engines to deliver "rich snippets" to enhance search listing appearance. Products with vendor-model-year variations make use of the latest "ProductGroup" schema. recognized by Google; this also helps avoid duplicate content issues.
- Each page includes a table listing of each sub-variant the part will fit to provide additional context for search engines to understand the product in relation to others like it.
- Each of the unique "variation page" URLs and attached images are included in the sitemap to ensure search engines recognize all 590,000+ pages and images for search engine indexing.

The model for extending core products into category-based product variations looks like this:

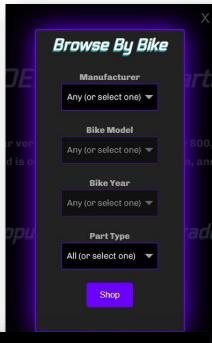


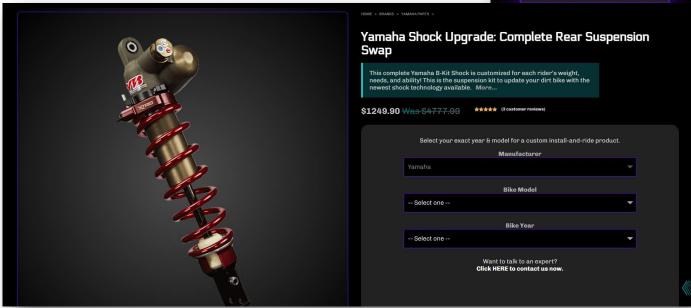


## It's Easy to Find Your Part

Now that we could "drill-down" to parts specific to a given bike vendor-model-year, we created a "Browse By Bike" user interface that made it simple for users to find parts for their specific bike, and even organize them by part type (brake parts, lighting, wheels & suspension, etc.).

And on Product detail pages where variations of a product exist, the user is presented with a lookup feature where they would select their specific bike make, model and year from the available variations before being given the ability to add the product to their cart. This gives the user assurance that the product will indeed be made to fit their very specific bike while also preventing product returns for the retailer due to non-fitment.

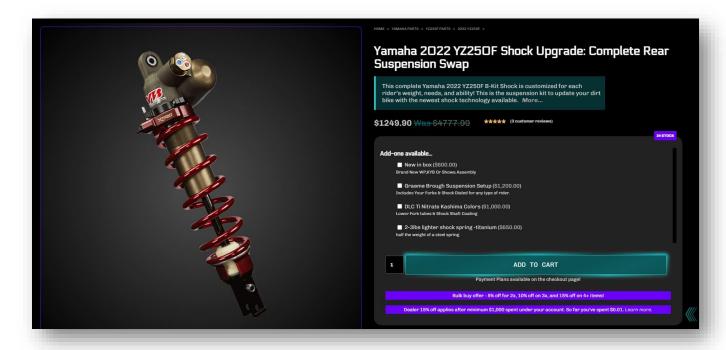




In addition to improving the user experience, these lookup / fitment features serve another purpose -- to better understand the needs of the customer. We store information about users in the database (user "profiles"), which includes their email address, last search performed, and information about their engagement with marketing emails (opens, clicks etc.). Users who had previously opted-in for marketing emails are "known" and their selections are then stored under their user profiles. With this information, the client can send automated yet <u>personalized</u> marketing emails with part recommendations which will fit the user's specific bike.



Here's the same product page with the bike's specific model and year defined:



# Extending the Reach of the Store

Next, we extended the reach of the store with XML product feeds for Google Merchant Center, Bing Merchants, Facebook and Pinterest. Every night, our system would dynamically build XML product feed files specific to each external shopping platform that consisted of all 590,000+ product titles, descriptions, prices, shipping costs, image links, SKU numbers, and more. (No existing plugin could do this because the 590,000+ products exist outside of the standard WooCommerce system, so these features are also custom coded!)

This extension of the store to other shopping platforms resulted in **tens of thousands of new "clicks" to product pages every week** -- IN ADDITION TO the organic traffic we were already growing.

### **Gamification for First-Party Data**

Especially in an age when third-party cookies are a thing of the past, acquiring "first-party data" – like having an opt-in email list -- should be a top priority for any business! Moreover, once a visitor is "known" (such as, by having submitted their email address), then the business can use the visitor's behavior on the website to build a "profile".

For this business, knowing the visitor's vendor, model and year of their bike is essential for providing relevant, even personalized product recommendations via email or during the shopping experience. Doing so is a proven way to boost sales and develop a relationship with the customer based on trust.

We built a custom gamification popup for capturing visitor emails. It has been a highly effective way to quickly build a sizeable email list – over 5,500 valid, opt-in email addresses in under 1 year.

Once the user submits their email, the wheel will spin and land on a prize. Prizes are randomly selected, but the result is skewed by a set probability. In other words, we can set the system so that 60% of the time, the wheel will stop at "10% off", 40% of the time it will stop at "20% off", and it will NEVER land on anything else. (We want the user to *think* they can land on a high-value prize, even though they never will.)



When the prize is selected, the user

will receive the coupon code via email. This prevents users from submitting false emails just to get the coupon.

Users who had opted-in for marketing emails are now "known", so during their website visit and during any future visits, we can record their product search selections and build a "profile" around their behavior on the website.

For example, if the user selects "2001 Honda CR125R" when using the *Browse By Bike* search feature or the product fitment lookup on the Product Detail pages, we know their bike!

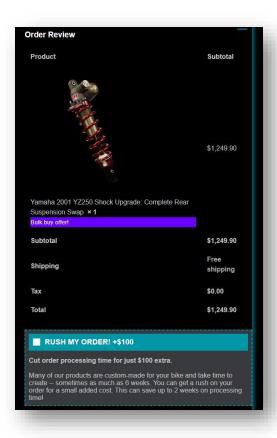
We can then use that information to send personalized, highly relevant marketing communications, such as an email of "The Most In-Demand Parts for the 2001 Honda CR125R" containing links to the SPECIFIC products that fit their SPECIFIC bike.



# Checkout Page "Add-On"

Another tool to increase revenue is to include an attractive addon on the Cart and Checkout Pages.

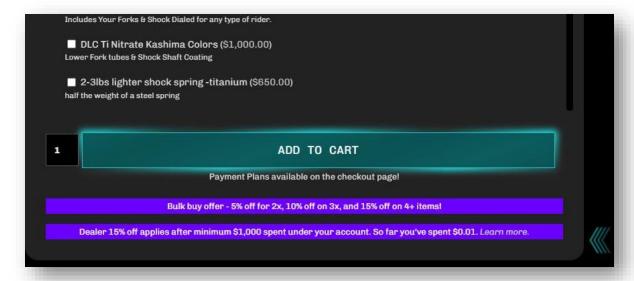
For this client, the upsell for "Rush My Order +\$100" yielded nearly \$10,000 in ancillary revenue in the first year it was introduced.



## **Product Page Promotions**

We built a custom system for applying bulk-buy discounts. Messaging appears below the "Add to cart" button on Product pages. The promotion can be defined "universally" for all products in the store, excluded for specific products, or defined uniquely for a given product (overriding the "universal" store-wide definition).

We also created a special promotion engine for users who register (and are verified) as Dealers, which is also visible on the product pages and this promotion applies after that user has spent at least \$1,000 in the store.





## The Results -- Organic Traffic

It takes a little time for search engines to crawl and interpret 590,000+ new product pages. Most of the growth occurred over the course of 60 days. But when looking at growth over a period of two fiscal quarters, the results speak for themselves: 197% increase in weekly ORGANIC page views, and a 227% increase in weekly ORGANIC users. From Google Analytics...





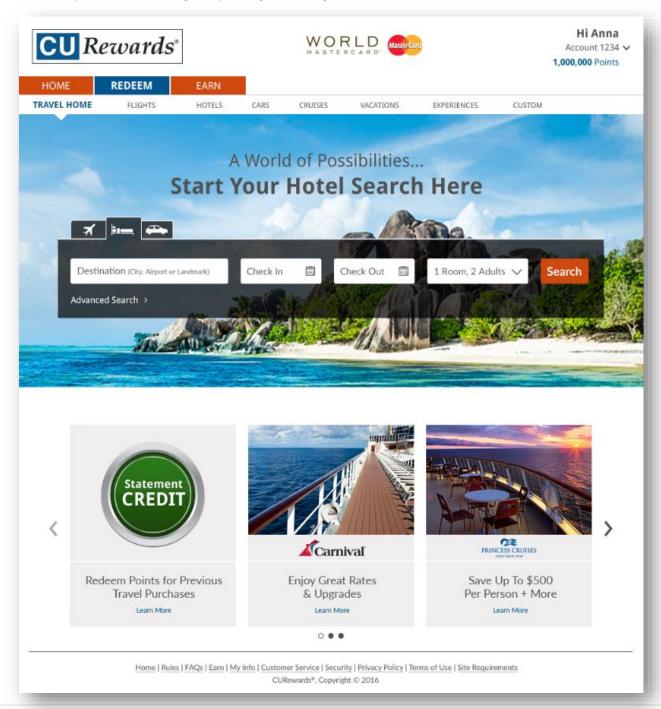
### The Results -- REVENUE

This work, along with various enhancements to the user interface, resulted in a **326% increase in annual sales** -- a 4x increase in revenue!



### CURewards Travel – Website Features

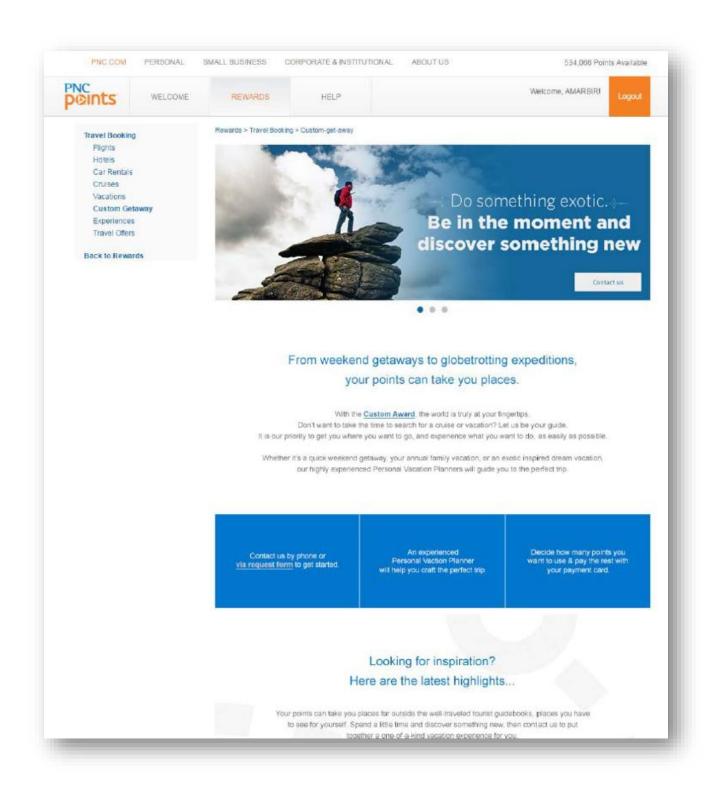
CURewards is a Visa and Mastercard loyalty program serving 8 million members of credit unions around the country, and accounting for over \$70 million in annual purchases of flights, car rentals, hotel stays, cruises and vacation packages. Like with the Wells Fargo program, we led the team that built the Travel portion of the rewards program and built several key features ourselves, including **travel deals** (shown below, which open to details via a modal popup) and **traveler profiles** (ADA-compliant user storage and recall of personal & family member information like frequent flyer program numbers, passport info, contact info etc. for form autocompletion when filling complex flight booking forms).





### PNC Bank - PNC Points Travel Website

Like the Wells Fargo and CURewards programs, this is the travel rewards program for cardholders with PNC Bank...





# Big Day Records Website



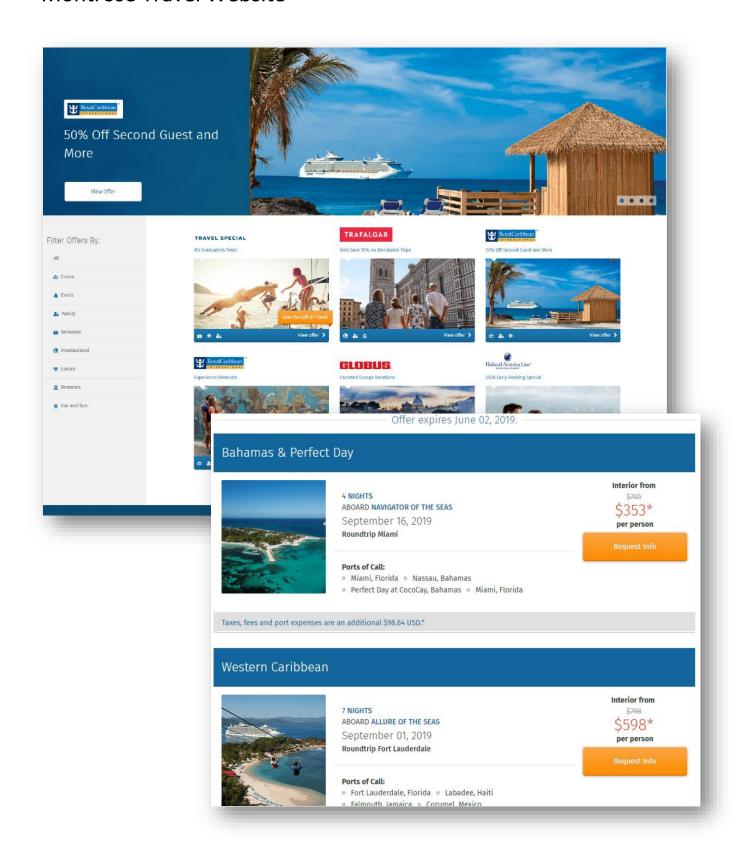


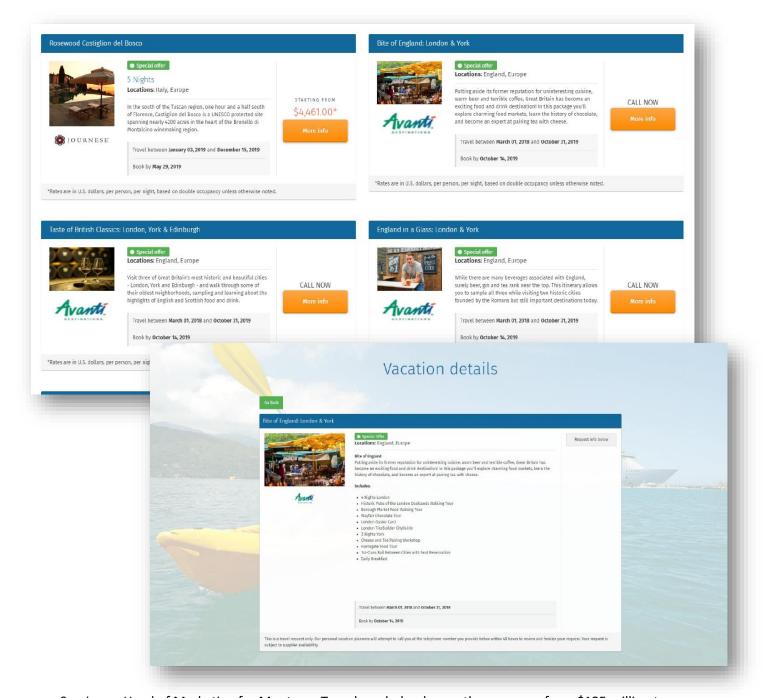






## Montrose Travel Website



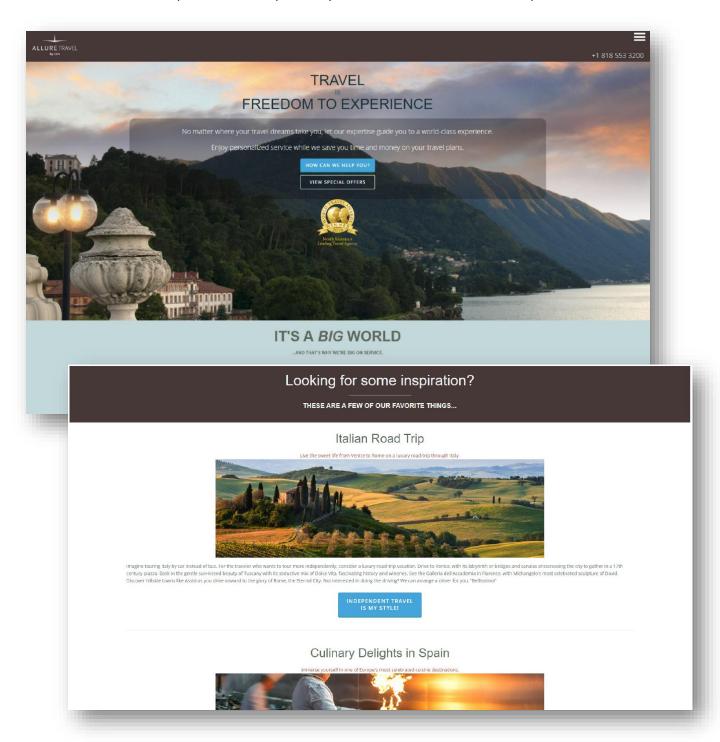


Serving as Head of Marketing for Montrose Travel, we helped grow the company from \$125 million to over \$325 million in a few short years. We were then instrumental in the company's acquisition by CTM (Corporate Travel Management), a \$4 billion global travel company. We were deeply involved with the merger and served as Head of Marketing & Application Development for CTM North America, where our team built their website.



# Allure Travel Website (CTM)

Prior to CTM's acquisition of Montrose Travel, the company maintained its own leisure travel brand called "Allure Travel". In 2019, Allure Travel absorbed the Montrose Travel brand, but prior to this we personally built and maintained a separate website specifically for Allure Travel. Here are a couple screenshots:

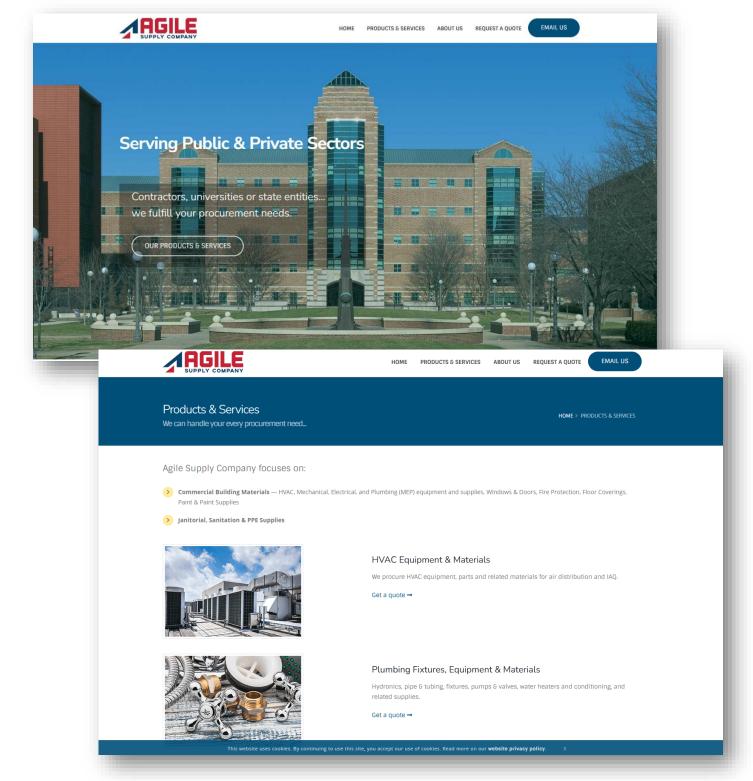




# Agile Supply Company - Website

#### https://agilesupplycompany.com

This client is a Chicago-based procurement firm (sister company to **Agile General Contractors** – see earlier in this document). The website is mostly informational with the ability for the user to "request a quote" on products and services. This is a "from scratch" website (not Wordpress).





#### About Us

Procurement with a personal touch...

HOME > ABOUT US

#### Hi, I'm Bryan Banks, President of Agile Supply Company. Welcome!

We're glad you're here. Allow me to introduce Agile Supply Company, a minority-owned, MBE-certified and NMSDC-certified, provider of procurement services to clients in both private and public sectors.

Whether you are a general or sub-contractor executing a job for an owner, or a university or state entity needing to buy direct, we can fulfill the procurement needs of your project!

Through a customer-centric, "value added" approach, we ensure that we are tightly aligned with the needs and timelines of our customers and partners in order to achieve mutual objectives.

We're big enough to handle your every procurement need, but small enough to care about providing unmatched personalized service to every one of our clients — a mandate we take very seriously day in and day out

I am a firm believer in finding your true passion; mine is working with our clients to help them achieve their full potential and realize optimal growth. Put us to work for you!



President Agile Supply



HOME

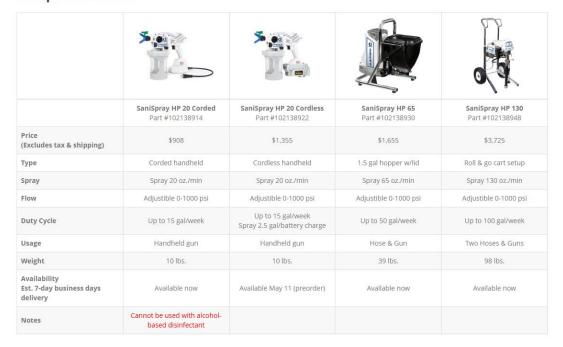
PRODUCTS & SERVICES

ABOUT US

REQUEST A QUOTE

EMAIL US





GET DETAILS OR ORDER





Brass Ring Consulting Group is a full-service consulting firm, specializing in Marketing, Web Development, Product Strategy, Finance, Business Planning and Venture Funding.

We've been there on the front lines: writing and executing award-winning business plans and marketing plans, developing standalone and web-based applications to solve complex business needs or to deliver exceptional customer experiences, and raising millions in funding from angel and venture capital investors. We've played a key role in generating over \$2 billion in revenue for our clients and partners.

Our experience allows us to do what others can't — look at your business holistically.

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