

FirstSpirit™

2007

A perfect fit: Görtz implements FirstSpirit

A new content management system for its corporate website.



FirstSpirit™

Every great journey begins with a small step. Nobody understands this better than a company like Ludwig Görzt GmbH, whose aim is to keep people on the move with the right kind of stylish footwear. When the journey refers to the direction the company's IT should take in the digital era, however, sometimes rather larger leaps are necessary. Görzt has just taken one of these with a complete redesign of their corporate website www.goertz-corporate.de.

Görzt has thoroughly revised its corporate presentation and launched a new design, new functions and a new content management system to facilitate direct, fast and convenient website maintenance by its employees.

Everything's possible – with Görzt

With over 200 outlets and 3,000 employees, Görzt is one of Germany's leading shoe and accessory retailers. The company was founded in 1875 by Johann Ludwig Görzt and is still in family hands today. It has shops in more than 90 towns and cities in

Germany, Austria and Poland. The company history of Ludwig Görzt GmbH is a story of steady growth. From an initial 14m² in its first retail outlet in Hamburg, the company now has a total sales area of 120,000m².

And naturally the company has also exploited the digital world for its sales and representation opportunities, as well as support for its general business activities.

The starting point

As business expanded, so too did the IT structure at Görzt. It grew organically and over the course of the years was expanded and extended in response to increasing demands. This also meant that both its online shop and corporate website were externally hosted and administered. The company responsible for this specialised in e-commerce, which made sense for operating an online shop, but was not ideal for a corporate site. What is more, the corporate website consisted of static HTML pages, to which the employees responsible for website content had no direct access. Every change to corporate content had to be commissioned and implemented outside the company.

And adding content at short notice was scarcely possible with this process. Other problems were caused by the existence of duplicate information on the intranet and internet. The shop finder function, for example, was administered internally via the intranet, but was also available on the internet. This meant that all new information had to be entered twice, creating a potential source of error, particularly when it came to minor changes such as new shop opening times. For customers, however, such minor details were often a source of great annoyance.

New goals

It was clear that the website had great potential for improvement in terms of structure and content maintenance.



The initial catalyst for the relaunch, however, came in 2006 when the company decided to overhaul and optimise both the layout and functions of the website in order to present the Görzt company and its services in a more contemporary way.

A logical step was to plan general improvements in the context of these measures. It was important that the corporate website should offer better user-friendliness and be easy and convenient to maintain via an appropriate content management system (CMS). Control over site content should occur in-house and this included hosting with the company's own hardware. This was achieved using an IBM Linux/Intel-based server equipped with Apache, Tomcat and IBM DB2 9.0.

Görzt approached the Hamburg-based company Ethalon GmbH, who not only offers its customers individual Java development and IT consulting, but also company portal solutions. The project was launched at the end of 2006 and the new Görzt website finally went live in April 2007.

The right CMS – FirstSpirit

Choosing a content management system that was capable of fulfilling all the necessary requirements was an important step in preparing to relaunch the corporate site. The chosen product was FirstSpirit: a CMS from international product supplier, e-Spirit. James Hill, Marketing Manager at Ethalon, explains the reasons behind this decision, "We enabled the technical integration of FirstSpirit into IBM's WebSphere Portal while building a corporate portal, so we know the CMS inside out. The fit was almost perfect, as it can also be used for portal content in future." A VM server with Suse Linux Enterprise Server 9 and IBM DB2 8.2 as a database will be used for the CMS system of the corporate site.

FirstSpirit is a client/server application that is implemented to 100% in Java. It is based on Java and web technology with component-based software architecture. A standardised access interface enables existing applications and data sources to be linked and individual functions to be developed. This means that FirstSpirit can be easily expanded and integrated into existing IT infrastructures.

Another reason why the CMS was a good match for Görzt is its high number of out-of-the-box functions and its flexible, expandable infrastructure, which offers ideal preconditions for swift integration. The separation of content, presentation and structure was one of the most important features of FirstSpirit and played a vital role in the decision to implement FirstSpirit for the Görzt corporate website. This feature allows content to be reused in different contexts.

Not all website editors have the same knowledge of IT and display identical user behaviour. This is why FirstSpirit provides two different clients. The Java client enables easy content maintenance as well as administrative tasks such as authorisation allocation, and can also be used for creating templates. The Web client can be operated intuitively from any location. It is designed for occasional users who only use the CMS for more simple editing work. FirstSpirit with Web and Java client access is available for five projects and five simultaneous users of the Görzt corporate website.

Improved results

Ethalon realised the new Görtz corporate website from January to April 2007. Following a two-day internal training programme, its future key users were ready: three marketing employees and two HR employees, who were responsible for the careers page. Michaela Witz, PR Consultant at Görtz and one of the key users of the corporate website, is extremely satisfied with the new situation. "We used to have to email any requests for changes to the support agency. Now we can edit all content ourselves using FirstSpirit. This is much more convenient and faster too. Plus, we no longer have to perform the same tasks twice." This not only applies to the actual text, but also to the look and feel of the site. "Replacing images is just as easy. I find it particularly helpful that there is a test page that enables me to see exactly how content will appear in the layout before it is published online." The press department also profits from fast site maintenance, and can react almost instantaneously to current events. Numerous potential future employees are happy about the optimised career page, which features a user-friendly online application form and lets you attach files such as work specimens or certificates directly.



Future prospects

Further steps are already in the pipeline. Görtz plans to further expand its career section and will soon be offering the entire corporate website in English. These plans were already outlined in the initial phase of the current project and also played a role in the company's decision to opt for FirstSpirit. Multilingualism is a basic principle of the CMS. Websites with visitors from different countries can be easily edited. The result is both country-specific and consistent with the respective corporate design. Unicode also allows Chinese, Arabic and Cyrillic alphabets to be implemented perfectly.

Now nothing stands in the way of Görtz continuing to develop its corporate website. No matter how far Görtz wishes to travel – even if it's only via the Internet.

contact person

Ludwig Görtz GmbH
Michaela Witz
michaela.witz@goertz.de

Ethalon GmbH
James Hill
james.hill@ethalon.de

e-Spirit AG
Barcelonaweg 14
44269 Dortmund
Germany

t +49 231 . 286 61-30
f +49 231 . 286 61-59

e-Spirit UK Ltd
88 Wood Street
London
EC2V 7RS
UK

t +44 208 . 528 1021
f +44 208 . 528 1001



e-Spirit^{AG}

info@e-Spirit.de
www.e-Spirit.de

info@e-Spirit.co.uk
www.e-Spirit.co.uk