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ShareCRAZY

Client Success Story: ShareCrazy

All New Subscription Service for Share Trading Website

The client

ShareCrazy's initial concept and vision for a "one stop online shop for the investor" has become a proven, established share trading and information site with unique branding, positioning and established trading client base. Mixing residual trading, advertising and subscription revenue streams has resulted in a solid, resilient and growing business.

The Business Requirement

ShareCrazy had a requirement to revise their existing online share trading website to incorporate a number of bespoke solutions in order to create a one-stop-shop facility for its established group of traders and investors. The new requirements included live, streaming share information, detailed trading and fundamental data, and a community-based forum for their established group of traders. ShareCrazy also wanted to move to a multiple subscription based model whilst ensuring security for subscription members.

ShareCrazy is a community-driven site, with a discussion forum for traders to exchange tips, encouragement and information. ShareCrazy wanted to provide a suite of fully-integrated information tools, products and offers which can be accessed by purchasing a subscription. All existing features of the previous site would still be available free of charge, with certain new additions being exclusively available to paying users.

ShareCrazy also provide what is known as Level 2 Information, this includes up-to-the-minute data on current share prices. Additionally, ShareCrazy have agreements to interface with third party sources of information to display on their site. One of the major technical challenges that would need to be overcome was the need for seamless and secure integration of the site with these third party systems. This had to be implemented in such a way that it would be a consistent user experience. Brand integrity was also paramount for ShareCrazy as it is one of their major distinguishing elements from their competitors. The information from various sources needed to be consolidated into what would be perceived by its users, as a single point of access with a consistent look and feel.

Lastly, ShareCrazy needed complete administrative control over the various areas of the site. These included the forums, online shop, user and subscription management, monthly events and despatching newsletters. ShareCrazy also needed to be able to add further elements in the future, without the need for external expertise.

The Sigmer Solution

ShareCrazy appointed Sigmer Technologies for a bespoke solution to assist them with achieving their goals. The brief was a challenging one as Sigmer had to retain the easy navigation of the site as well as ensure members on different subscription packages could move seamlessly and securely around the ShareCrazy site and third party sites accessed through the ShareCrazy site.

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As a previous version of the site existed, Sigmer first decided to port over to the stable and secure Linux and Apache technologies, before adding the new features and enhancements.

Sigmer then worked closely with the third party technology partners when developing the security and integration of ShareCrazy. The aim was to make everything fit together into a seamless user experience. Each of the third-party tools were hosted on different servers, so when directing users to these features it was necessary to authenticate individual users to check if their subscription should allow access to the various types of information available. All of this was to be tightly controlled from a security perspective, yet it also had to be usable, one set of login details per user provides access to everything a user is entitled to on the site.

Continuity of appearance between the sites was also part of the design brief from ShareCrazy. As the original design worked well, Sigmer only had to change the design of the templates. Sigmer completely rebuilt the way the site pages were constructed using a template system. A series of four or five different templates cover the different sections of the website. In order to ensure that ShareCrazy could manage the site automatically, the new templates were designed so that new sections could easily be added on at a later date. The templates also facilitate the assigning of access to different areas for the varying subscriber levels by ShareCrazy, so that user security is guaranteed under client management. The use of these templates and style sheets ensured that the new system was easy to maintain, and with minimal effort on the part of ShareCrazy. The templates provided also complied with Accessibility Level 1 requirements, as defined in the W3C guidelines. Adding a subscription service for the new tools and data to the existing share trading site meant that security was of primary importance. Ensuring security for the subscription members, who have varying levels of access to the ShareCrazy site depending on their subscription type, was vital. Sigmer had to make sure that the 'freebie' users of the new site were not able to access the paid for information pages, which are only available to the higher-level 'Supermarket' or 'Hypermarket' subscribers. Similarly, they had to ensure the Supermarket members couldn't access areas designated solely for Hypermarket subscribers.

Sigmer also created a system of strict authentication that prevents more than one person logging onto the same account at the same time. The new design had to track and verify the identity of the users as they move across the different hosted sites, whilst keeping the user permanently logged in without having to re-register on each host page. This maintains ShareCrazy's aims to provide an easy to use trading and information website, without compromising user security as it ensures that the third-party sites do not send requested information to an impostor.

The Result

Sigmer fulfilled the requirements that successfully reinvented ShareCrazy's online presence, moving their existing site forward in terms of technology and design. This has provided the ShareCrazy team with a flexible management system, putting control of their site in their hands alongside Sigmer's technical expertise.

Continuity of appearance between the sites has worked extremely well, and ShareCrazy are particularly pleased with how their unique branding – cartoon character Joe Public – successfully appears on the right pages at the right time, regardless of the host. Joe public accompanies the user throughout the site in various guises, for example as 'Hyper Joe' for 'Hypermarket' subscribers. This involved Sigmer creating rules across multiple-host sites.

"We had a demanding wish list for Sigmer Technologies, which they have proved more than capable of delivering," said Alan Green, Co-founder of ShareCrazy. "It was very difficult porting across all the old data but they managed it. Sigmer realised very quickly our long-term vision of the 'one-stop-shop' for the investor and trader. In the future we will want to offer new services and the design and structure of the new site will enable us to make additions without the need for external expertise."

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Nigel Gill, Senior Operations Manager of Sigmer Technologies, said, "ShareCrazy's brief was very challenging, specifically because of the need for seamless movement and continuity between the multi-host sites, as well as implementing stringent security measures. Establishing security checks within one host site is very simple, but managing security across several host sites is a very complicated process. There was also the matter of downtime on the launch day when the new content design was transferred to the website."

Sigmer provides server maintenance support for ShareCrazy, including the gathering of site statistics and data reports. Sigmer is involved with providing ongoing technical advice and support for new features. After sales service agreements ensure that things are kept running smoothly and that ShareCrazy is in a position to expand their online business effectively.

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