

The Walking Company

CLIENT SUCCESS

SNAPSHOT



ORGANIZATION

With 200 retail stores nationwide, The Walking Company is a leading independent specialty retailer of high quality, technically designed comfort shoes and accessories.

CHALLENGE

Create an online shopping experience that delivers the premium quality that The Walking Company is well known for in its retail stores.

STRATEGY

Overhaul the old website with a completely revamped look and feel supported by the latest web-development and order-fulfillment technology to deliver a rich and inviting shopping experience for customers.

SOLUTION

A newly updated online presence provides shoppers with a wealth of innovative shopping and browsing options. Management benefits from improved capabilities behind the scenes.

RESULTS

The online shopping experience is vastly improved for customers. Six months after the launch of the new website, online sales had increased by 1,000 percent.

If you visit any of The Walking Company's 208 retail footwear stores and their website, you may notice similarities between the physical shop and the company's online presence. Both are inviting and intelligently organized. In both cases, you immediately get the sense that the products they offer and the shopping experience itself are sophisticated and technically advanced.

This similarity between the company's online presence and physical stores is no accident. Recently, The Walking Company asked Visus LLC to reengineer its website. Its former site offered limited functionality to shoppers. To provide its customers with the high quality service it is famous for, The Walking Company needed a website that could deliver an experience as comfortable and accommodating as its footwear products, with a focus on making it as easy as possible for shoppers to find and purchase the right shoes for their needs.

"Visus LLC helped us create a state of the art, user-friendly website around our company vision that very closely mirrored the look, feel, and brand image of our sophisticated high end retail stores," says Patrick Stewart, vice president of marketing for The Walking Company. "The new website has helped us reach out to new customers and has been instrumental in helping us ramp up our online business, which grew over 1,000 percent within six months of the new site's launch."

Walking with a Technology Partner that Delivers

The Walking Company's previous website had limited ecommerce functionality. It was originally created as a marketing tool. "The focus of our old site was more on establishing our brand," explains Kevin Fichman, senior manager of web and IT at The Walking Company. "We were able to leverage that for a while. But as catalog sales grew, we saw that there was an increasing demand for sales beyond the four walls of our mall shops. We began thinking about what would be required to provide our customers with the same high quality shopping experience online that they experience in our stores."

"Visus LLC is an all encompassing professional service provider that delivers on their promises. They completely revamped and re-engineered our website, from concept to design, upfront engineering, architecture, development, testing and deployment."

– Kevin Fichman, senior manager of web and IT, The Walking Company

Decision makers at The Walking Company didn't need to look far to find a technology partner that could deliver on their needs. The company had previously engaged Visus LLC to help them create an in-store kiosk system that gives customers and sales personnel instant access to a broader inventory than the mall shops can physically carry.

"Visus turned the kiosk project around quickly, providing us with everything we had

The Walking Company

CLIENT SUCCESS

hoped for,” says Fichman. “Based on that success, we felt confident approaching them for the website overhaul. We knew from having previously worked with them that the team at Visus go the extra mile to make sure they thoroughly understand our vision and requirements.”

Management at The Walking Company had a good idea of the look and feel they wanted for the site. Visus was instrumental in laying out what was possible technically. “Visus LLC is very good at presenting ideas that are up-to-date in today’s world where things get obsolete very quickly,” Stewart says. “They operate as an efficient and productive organization that listens to your needs and take great care on the execution. They take it very seriously, focus on it, execute it, and follow up on it—not just in the beginning, but throughout the whole process.”

Taking Changes in Stride

The previous version of The Walking Company’s website was built on Microsoft ASP.NET 1.1. It incorporated I-frames that required a lot of scrolling and could only display a few products at a time. The shopping cart and checkout process also needed improvement.

Visus and The Walking Company agreed on a fairly aggressive timeline of three months for the website project.

“In today’s economy if you want to survive, let alone thrive, you really need to be able to float like a butterfly and definitely need to stay agile. The Walking Company has become more agile, productive, and profitable through its relationship with Visus LLC.”

– Patrick Stewart, vice president of marketing, The Walking Company

“The go-live date was critical to other components of the business,” says Ralph Kimball, director of MIS at The Walking Company. “If we had missed it, it would have created a domino effect that could jeopardize our holiday sales. Visus dug into the details and devoted the necessary resources to completing it on schedule. We were impressed. There’s no way we could have accomplished that in-house.”

The new site, based on Microsoft ASP.NET 2.0, vastly improves the functionality and ease of use for customers. For example, they can access powerful options that enable

them to filter by comfort of shoe, style of shoe, heel size, and many other parameters.

“The entire customer experience is much richer now,” says Kimball. “Visus took usability to a whole new level – from searching for products to loading shopping carts and processing transactions. Even finding our walk-in stores is easier now, thanks to integrated Google Maps. Visus also created very sophisticated promotion and discount functionality for us. The new site is a dramatic improvement.”

A Comfortable User Experience

Important additional functionality is powered by integration work that Visus did with Escalate Retail’s Ecometry web order fulfillment software. Integration with Ecometry helps increase the accuracy and efficiency of the site by incorporating features such as real time inventory checks and real time credit card authorization.

“The work Visus did with Ecometry ensures that we don’t offer a customer a product that we don’t have, which is more complex than it appears,” says Kimball. “It also helps us address any payment problems immediately so our customers can get their purchases quickly.”

Exceeding customer expectations is a top priority for The Walking Company. It’s also what drives Visus LLC.

“We are proud of the website that Visus LLC helped us implement and that we are presenting to the world,” Stewart summarizes. “The world is full of software development companies. But how many of them have mastered the elements of staying on time, on budget, and living up to the customer’s expectations? Visus LLC is one of these companies. We were extremely pleased. Visus LLC gets an A+ in these areas!”

For more success stories, please visit:

visusllc.com/success-stories