

SOLO AFFITTI MODERNIZES REAL ESTATE PORTAL FOR ITALIAN RENTERS WITH PROGRESS



Client



Industry

Real Estate

Products

Sitefinity CMS

Summary

Solo Affitti modernized its web presence with Sitefinity CMS, improving ease of use and navigation. The site is tightly integrated with the company's CRM, enabling them to monitor online campaign results in real time and update content accordingly, without involving IT

Integrations

Microsoft Dynamics, Franchisee Agency Management Software, Google Maps

Challenge

Solo Affitti began in Italy in 1996, when a group of real estate professionals from Cesena recognized an opportunity to capitalize on an obvious gap in the market for home rentals. After a year, the group had grown to be the leading real estate franchise in Italy for rentals. Today, the Solo Affitti network encompasses more than 300 franchise agencies and is an established brand that stands for passion, sharing, innovation and quality of service.

The Solo Affitti website was run using legacy technology; content changes were time-consuming, because they had to be implemented by a programmer in HTML code and put online by the ERP vendor, who also managed branding. Additionally, the site's structure and SEO strategy needed improvement.

"The content on the site was redundant, and the site wasn't user-friendly," said Stefania Bartolini, IT Manager at Solo Affitti, who said searching and filling out forms was a tedious process that needed fixing to improve the customer's experience, as well as relationships with other Solo Affitti franchises.

The team wanted to create a new website that would serve as a centralized solution for collecting information about subscribing agencies, property owners

and prospective tenants. Usability and ease of navigation were essential for meeting the needs of various user groups searching for properties, reading property spec sheets and finding relevant information. The site processes an average of 150,000 sessions per month.

"Our goal was to provide additional services to prospective tenants while integrating the site with our CRM system, so we could track and manage data about property owners and prospective franchises, while handling other common requests," said Bartolini. "We also wanted to be able to update property offers in real time."

Solution

Bartolini's team worked with Progress partner Gruppo Sistema to modernize and develop the new website, and they recommended using Progress® Sitefinity™ Content Management System (CMS).

A key reason was the ability to integrate Sitefinity with Microsoft Azure, which was selected as the cloud platform because of the rapid, reliable and flexible scalability offered in self-provisioning. Through Azure dashboards, Solo Affitti can adjust computing capacity, depending on peak moments due to promotional activities or events that generate increased traffic.

"The main benefit of the union of Sitefinity and Azure lies in the ease of publishing and updating through the automatic procedures," said Bartolini. "Plus, Sitefinity is intuitive and easy to use, and enables our marketing team to update content independent of IT."

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Stefania Bartolini,
IT Manager, Solo Affitti

The flexibility and native scalability of Sitefinity have enabled the integration of the company's properties catalogue, which is pulled in real time from the franchise agencies' management software. Key developments include:

- A new search function aimed at making navigation more user friendly by pairing table research to map-based research.
- Enhancing the user experience with e-commerce functionalities such as displaying the property viewed most recently.
- The ability to see property comparisons and automatic notifications of similar properties to those searched.
- A suggestion feature that presents properties that might be of interest. Users can also create a "favorites" list with a few clicks.

Sitefinity connects the website to various other systems, including the company's CRM, Microsoft Dynamics and the management software used by the franchise agencies. Data such as property images and content is extracted from the property management systems and uploaded to the website in real time. As customer data feeds into the Sitefinity backend, it can be used for sales and marketing enablement.

"The Sitefinity platform's tools and services have made data management easier as it flows directly into our CRM system for analysis, segmentation and remarketing in the franchisees' management systems," said Francesca Cantoni, Franchising Manager, Solo Affitti.

Results

With the new modernized website, Solo Affitti is saving time and making a greater impact with online content and campaigns. The company is able to redirect marketing dollars to more strategic, more valuable tasks. “With the new site built on Sitefinity, we can publish new landing pages and contact forms for different campaigns, and easily manage custom content ourselves. This reduces publishing time dramatically—from days to just minutes—because we don’t have to wait for an external vendor to complete the changes,” Bartolini said.

Additionally, new features have boosted traffic and reduced bounce rates. “After 18 months, the number of bounces have dropped from 40 to 28 percent,” Bartoloni said. “Also, because users can save their searches and receive notifications of new properties with similar characteristics, we can maintain contact with prospects and bring them back to the portal, increasing the possibility of capturing new business.”

“In an industry in which search engines ranking and content originality is key to attracting business, being able to update content in real time is essential. Not only does Sitefinity help us do this more efficiently, we can monitor results in real time, because the site is tightly integrated with our CRM. Our marketers now have the processes and tools in place to optimize their campaigns and achieve best-possible results.”

Francesca Cantoni,
Franchising Manager, Solo Affitti

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“Going live with the new and responsive website has given us a cutting-edge portal that can be used on any device, desktop and mobile,” said Cantoni. “The website is much more user-centric, catering to the needs of prospective renters who make up about 90 percent of our traffic.” For example, the new “site’s on-map search” enables users to select a desired area on a map. Users can compare properties based on rental fees, floor space and other characteristics. “Thanks to Sitefinity, the site now provides a simple, effective search experience and results that suit the user’s needs,” she said.

Cantoni added that the ability to manage content directly helps improve SEO. “In an industry in which search engines ranking and content originality is key to attracting business, being able to update content in real time is essential,” she said. “Not only does Sitefinity help us do this more efficiently, we can monitor results in real time, because the site is tightly integrated with our CRM. Our marketers now have the processes and tools in place to optimize their campaigns and achieve best-possible results.”

About Solo Affitti

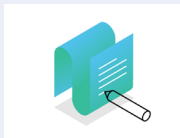
In 1996 Solo Affitti was still just an idea for a group of entrepreneurs from Cesena; margins for improvement in the real estate market were significant in terms of "answers to tenants and landlords" and this strong signal was an incentive to offer a better service, complete and on time, filling a clear gap in the rental dynamics. Starting from these assumptions and strongly motivated by a growing consent, one year later the same group of agents laid the foundations of a new group that later became the leading home rental franchising in Italy. Today, Solo Affitti network has more than 300 local branches and has a well established brand representing passion, sharing, innovation and quality. For more information, visit www.soloaffitti.it

Implementing Partner

Gruppo Sistema is an ICT Company founded in 1984, focused on end-to-end business process automation. The company offers complete software solutions, integrating all departments through any hardware and software technologies needed for the Enterprise. Its 70+ software engineers build complete applications for ERO, BI, CRM and the Web (including B2B and B2C workflow management and collaboration process automation). A Progress Sitefinity Premier Partner since 2011, Gruppo Sistema is also one of the founders of Dygroup, an association with 15 distributed offices covering the whole Italian territory which deployed 300+ turn-key projects on Microsoft Dynamics. For more information, visit www.grupposistema.it



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