



Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada
Clubs Garçons et Filles du Canada

Overview

Country or Region: Canada
Industry: Nonprofit

Customer Profile

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) provides physical, educational, and social development to more than 200,000 young people and their families in more than 700 communities across Canada.

Business Situation

BGCC wanted to revitalize its website and also create a members-only portal where employees could share information with BGCC clubs across the country.

Solution

BGCC worked with technology partner Envision IT to build a new public-facing website and employee intranet using Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 for Internet Sites.

Benefits

- Increased site traffic by 20 percent
- Increased donations by 50 percent
- Improved information sharing
- Achieved annual administrative savings of US\$30,000

Youth Organization Boosts Site Traffic by 20 Percent with Dynamic New Web Presence

“Our effective use of graphics, multimedia, and social media tools encourages greater visitor interaction and engagement with our mission.”

Susan Bower, Vice President of Business Operations, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) wanted its web presence to be as dynamic and interesting as its programs. It had also long promised its 100 BGCC clubs an internal portal for sharing expertise, support, and training. BGCC engaged Envision IT, a member of the Microsoft Partner Network, to renovate its website using Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 for Internet Sites and to create a member portal at the same time. Thanks to its fresh website, which features many visuals, easy navigation, and constantly changing content, BGCC has seen site traffic increase 20 percent and donations from individuals increase 50 percent. With its new member portal, BGCC is able to communicate with clubs much more effectively and keep them informed and excited about BGCC programs. The nonprofit has also trimmed administrative costs by US\$30,000 annually, now that donations are processed electronically.

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Susan Bower, Vice President of Business Operations, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

Situation

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) provides programs that support the healthy physical, educational, and social development of more than 200,000 Canadian young people and their families each year. BGCC is an association of more than 100 clubs located in 700 communities across Canada. Clubs are in neighborhoods where they are most needed—in large city centers, in remote rural communities, and on First Nations reserves. Trained, dedicated staff and volunteers provide children and youth with programs in physical recreation, technology, the arts, personal development, and more. Many clubs also provide meals, family support programs, emergency shelter, and other support to at-risk youth. At its national headquarters in Markham, Ontario, BGCC employs 30 people. Another 4,000 people are employed by individual BGCC clubs around the country.

In 2000, BGCC had launched a simple static website, but the site failed to keep up with the organization's evolving needs. Navigation was difficult, content publishing was time consuming, and the site could not support the latest web functionality. Also, for years, BGCC had promised its clubs a way to share best practices, tips, and tools online but had never been able to deliver an intranet with the old web foundation.

In 2010, BGCC got serious about renovating its web presence. It wanted to use its website to increase and deepen public awareness of its activities and make it easy to find information about the BGCC mission and the work of local Boys and Girls Clubs. It also wanted to reach more kids by helping communities find information on supporting Boys and Girls Clubs.

BGCC also sought to harness the power of the web to increase donations, corporate support, and volunteers for BGCC and member clubs. It hoped to do this by showing the impact of BGCC work with children and youth through national news, storytelling, and testimonials.

At the same time, BGCC wanted to create a place on its website where the staff at the national office could share information with local clubs, and local clubs could share successes with each other. "Most of our sharing was done through email, which was not a very efficient way of communicating," says Susan Bower, Vice President of Business Operations at Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada. "We needed an internal portal where we could collaborate online, share documents, and knit our far-flung BGCC family together."

Solution

BGCC had already implemented Microsoft Dynamics CRM as its primary contact management tool and had consolidated about 300 databases into one database connected to Microsoft Dynamics CRM. The new website needed to be able to connect seamlessly to this existing foundation.

This requirement, and the need for a bilingual web solution, led BGCC to Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010. "We thought that SharePoint Server would provide better integration with Microsoft Dynamics CRM, and also that it would be a great storytelling platform," Bower says. "We wanted to have a variety of mechanisms, such as rotating images and blogs, to tell our stories and draw in visitors. Other national nonprofits such as United Way Canada were also using SharePoint Server, which inspired our confidence."

"The beauty of SharePoint Server is that it provides one platform for everything."

Peter Carson, Chief Executive Officer,
Envision IT

One Internet Platform

In January 2010 BGCC engaged Envision IT of Mississauga, Ontario, to help with the website renovation. Envision IT is a member of the Microsoft Partner Network with a Gold competency in portals and collaboration and an expert in SharePoint Server 2010. "BGCC approached us about building two sites, but the beauty of SharePoint Server is that it provides one platform for everything," says Peter Carson, Chief Executive Officer of Envision IT. "Whether you're building a public website, an intranet, or an extranet, you have one consistent set of tools. We knew that, with SharePoint Server, we would only need to build one site to meet all of BGCC's needs."

Envision IT used Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 Enterprise for Internet Sites, a version that provides unlimited licenses for web use. It used Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Enterprise data management software as the database foundation, and linked the site to Microsoft Dynamics CRM. All servers run the Windows Server 2008 R2 Enterprise operating system. Both the public site and the member portal run on a virtualized infrastructure of two servers—the front-end server running SharePoint Server and the database server.

Envision IT augmented SharePoint Server 2010 with several custom add-ins such as an extranet user management tool and an image rotating web part. BGCC launched its new site in late 2010 after an eight-month development period.

More Engaging Public Site

The new BGCC website is bright, visually interesting, easy to move around, and very interactive. Rotating home page images take visitors to success stories

about individual kids, clubs, volunteers, and donors. A club locator tab makes it easy to find the nearest Boys and Girls Club.

"Being able to refresh our stories frequently and interestingly is great," Bower says. "Corporate sponsorship constitutes the bulk of our financial support; now we're able to profile these donors on our website. We can have videos on our site and integration with our YouTube channel."

A large red "Donate" tab makes it easy to make a donation online. Envision IT created a custom e-commerce solution with workflows that captures one-time and monthly online donations and transfers them into Microsoft Dynamics CRM, processes credit card payments, and sends an email message to the donor with an acknowledgement and tax receipt.

From an operations perspective, Microsoft Dynamics CRM is the key line-of-business application at BGCC. It tracks all clubs, service locations, staff, volunteers, donations, campaigns, newsletters, and marketing campaigns. It was crucial to BGCC that everything on the website feed into this program. By using the Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 development system, Envision IT was able to create custom web parts to achieve this linkage, ensuring that Microsoft Dynamics CRM is always up to date. The linkage works in the other direction too, providing rich club pages populated with information pulled from Microsoft Dynamics CRM.

Surveys, blogs, wikis, and incorporation of social media were all important requirements of the platform, and all are delivered by SharePoint Server 2010.

"Gifts [from individuals] have increased 50 percent over the last year and doubled from the previous year. This increase is directly related to the content on the website and the ease of accepting donations."

Susan Bower, Vice President of Business Operations, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada

From anywhere on the site, site visitors can find quick links to the organization's Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages.

Members-Only Portal

After quickly logging on, BGCC employees can easily access the member portal section of the website. Envision IT extended SharePoint Server functionality by building an Extranet User Manager that gives BGCC the necessary tools to create accounts for members, staff, and volunteers outside of their domain. Employees can also collaborate inside a highly secure SharePoint Server environment. The Extranet User Manager provides password management and lost password retrieval, a landing page for directing employees to specific collaboration sites, display and management of employees' site access, and web-based account creation and management.

The site uses audience targeting, so that employees can find the resources they need based on their permissions. Envision IT uses Microsoft Forefront Protection 2010 for SharePoint to ensure that all content uploaded or downloaded from the site is scanned and highly secure.

"We've been able to post more than 50 articles and checklists that clubs have been asking for," says Bower. "They relate to standards, training, human resources practices, good governance, and other topics that our clubs look to us to provide."

Member clubs can engage in conversations with national staff or with one another, either through comments on staff blogs or discussion boards on various topics. One BGCC staff member has launched a blog on the member

portal where she shares the results of research on issues relating to the healthy development of children and youth. Before, all site content had to be published by the communications director; today, many more employees are able to post content and keep the site relevant and up to date.

Benefits

With its new website, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada has been able to modernize and enliven its web presence. The result has been a 20 percent increase in site traffic, a 50 percent increase in donations from individuals, and improved information-sharing with local clubs. The nonprofit has even been able to trim US\$30,000 in annual administrative costs due to electronic donation processing.

Increased Site Traffic by 20 Percent

Since revitalizing its website, BGCC has seen the number of unique visitors increase from 50,270 to 60,256 in one year, a nearly 20 percent increase. It has also seen the number of page visits increase by 72 percent and the average time on the site increase by 122 percent.

"Our effective use of graphics, multimedia, and social media tools encourages greater visitor interaction and engagement with our mission," Bower says. "More time on our site translates to an increased public awareness of our activities."

BGCC also encourages submission of stories and testimonials. This helps tie the organization to its constituents and help build the public's trust.

Increased Donations by 50 Percent

BGCC has also seen donations rise since making it easy for contributors to donate

online. "Although individual gifts are currently a very small part of our budget, these gifts have increased 50 percent over the last year and doubled from the previous year," Bower says. "This increase is directly related to the content on the website and the ease of accepting donations."

BGCC can also do a better job of attracting and rewarding corporate donors, which provide the bulk of its funding. "We can better represent and publicize corporate donors on our new website," Bower says. "To increase traffic, we can create profiles and videos on these companies and cross-reference our corporate spotlights from multiple areas of the site."

Improved Information Sharing

With its new member portal, BGCC has an online platform that it can use to optimize communication, information-sharing, and innovation across the BGCC family. Club staff and volunteers across the country are kept connected to the club's mission through networking and sharing of knowledge, success stories, online/offline events, document-sharing, and innovation and expertise through community discussion forums. The portal acts as a repository for all information needed by member clubs, whether it is marketing materials, staff directories, online training, or information on upcoming events and fundraising initiatives.

The corporate office also has one place where it can gather guidelines, standards, and policies and keep them up to date. "We now have a place to post documents and track versioning," says Bower. "Things like bylaws and financial statements are easy to find. We are gradually moving content off our file

server to the website. A lot of our work gets done through committees; it's now very easy to post all committee documents online. It's a much tidier, more efficient way to operate, and it eliminates the need to send out material via email."

Achieved Annual Administrative Savings of \$30,000

BGCC is not only attracting more money but saving money with its new website. "We're saving two-thirds of an administrative salary on processing donations, because that's done automatically by the website now," Bower says. "That's an annual savings of about \$30,000, which isn't a large amount, but to a nonprofit, every savings is significant."

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