



Northeast Illinois Regional
Commuter Railroad Corporation,
Metra

www.metrarail.com

In partnership with

Acquity Group

www.acquitygroup.com



ACQUITY GROUP

Industry

Transportation

Challenges

- Providing travelers with more timely information
- Enabling cross-platform access to information
- Improving sales online to complement in-station transactions

Solution

- Web experience management
- Multichannel information distribution

METRA is using Web Experience Management from Adobe to deliver real-time information about travel schedules and ticket purchases to commuters via web, mobile, and social media platforms.

Results

- Increased website traffic by 178%, averaging 2.5 million hits per day
- Boosted online ticket sales by 200%
- Improved timeliness of schedule updates
- Engaged commuters over multiple communications channels
- Personalized commuter interactions with My Metra accounts
- Streamlined RFP and IFB processes

Systems at a glance

- Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform
- Adobe Customer Experience Solution:
- Web Experience Management

Metra

Regional commuter rail line uses Web Experience Management from Adobe to provide travelers with up-to-the-minute online and mobile updates

Transforming the transportation experience

Officially the Northeast Illinois Regional Commuter Railroad Corporation, Metra is Chicago's metropolitan commuter rail service. Metra manages 239 stations in Northeastern Illinois and over 11 routes totaling nearly 500 route miles. It operates about 700 weekday trains, serving more than 300,000 passengers a day, and approximately 85 million annual passenger trips.

To accommodate a growing number of passengers relying on digital channels for updates about service delays and schedules, Metra launched a new website using Adobe Customer Experience Solution: Web Experience Management (WEM).

Dating back to 1995, Metra's original website provided limited functionality. Employees were restricted in their ability to publish news and updates, and schedules were posted as static files. Wanting to deploy a more customer-friendly site, Metra engaged Acquity Group to devise a digital strategy initiative.

To address the needs of Metra's three primary audiences—occasional commuters, regular commuters, and experienced commuters—the company sought to easily and quickly update and upload content, make real-time schedule changes, personalize the online experience, alert riders via multiple channels, and better sell tickets online.

Supporting an enhanced look and feel, improving navigation, and incorporating feature requests from commuters—such as e-commerce integration for online ticket purchases—Acquity suggested that Metra standardize on Web Experience Management from Adobe. Since the launch, the site has seen a 178% increase in hits per day.

Going mobile

A critical component of Metra's multichannel strategy was deploying a mobile-optimized site, allowing commuters easy access to Metrarail.com from the convenience of their mobile devices. With support for iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, and iPad, the site can accommodate a high percentage of commuters, who can access schedule and station information, view service alerts, and purchase tickets.

Keeping riders informed

With WEM from Adobe, Metra's content authors can easily create and publish content. For example, when they create a service advisory or alert about service delays, holiday schedule changes, or severe weather warnings, the information is automatically distributed to relevant personalized pages and widgets. Plus, it's sent out via e-mail, mobile channels, and social media channels.

Metra can also notify registered users about critical information, populating social media channels and web and mobile sites with information. While the company has not yet had to make use of this event capability, the process is the same as issuing daily advisories. As a result, content authors can use a familiar process to notify the public about crises that impact train service.

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Jim Peffer
Corporate website management
team member, Metra

Easily updating schedules

With WEM from Adobe, Acquity was easily able to set up a content item for each train, which Metra populates with details such as whether or not bikes are allowed, and where and when the trains stop. In a single update, content authors can update different versions of schedules, personalized widgets, mobile schedules, and mapping services, such as Google Maps.

Metra can even use this feature to define in advance what will happen to schedules on holidays. When Metra needs to change schedules due to an unforeseen event, such as severe weather, it can turn off personalized features and point commuters to a page listing special details.

Selling more tickets online

To help Metra satisfy commuter demands for simpler e-commerce transactions, Acquity integrated WEM with Blue Martini. While WEM drives the creation, presentation, and distribution of information, Blue Martini handles the transaction. Though commuters choose from only 29 SKUs, back-end systems must calculate schedules and prices for hundreds of trains running each day. Scheduling objects in WEM makes it easy to manage this level of complexity.

Personalizing the web experience

Though commuters tend to ride the same train every day, their time of commute can vary. With the Web Experience Management solution, Metra can personalize the web and mobile web experience so riders can easily keep track of relevant schedules. Users create a "My Metra" account on the Metra site, through which they can manage traditional shopping cart, payment, and shipping information, along with e-mail, alert, and train preferences. Through the "My Next Train" feature, riders are alerted to relevant trains on their route via mobile devices and Metra's personalized home page.

Metra enjoys the journey

Since launching its new site, Metra has realized tremendous results. The site now sees 40,000 unique visitors per day, and has handled as many as 80,000 in a single day. This translates to an average of 2.5 million hits per day, a 178% increase from the former site's approximate 900,000 hits per day.

Metra has also boosted online ticketing by 200%, processing an average of 350 daily ticket sales. Plus, three weeks after launch, thousands of My Metra personalized profiles were created by 25% of regular riders. Based on this success, Metra extended this functionality to the business community.

Businesses can create accounts and access, download, and monitor Request for Proposal (RFP) and Invitation for Bid (IFB) opportunities with the rail service. Alerts are sent to registered users when new opportunities are posted and when current opportunities are modified or awarded.

Because Metra no longer needs to print out and FedEx RFPs and IFBs to interested parties, it has dramatically reduced the cost to administer the purchasing process. Going forward, Metra is exploring opportunities to deliver personalized, targeted ads and location-based ads, as well as mobile coupons and promotions.

For more information

www.adobe.com/customer-experience/enterprise-platform



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