

Avanade creates rich, engaging brand experience with new website



**Microsoft SharePoint 2010
enables easy updating of
multilingual content across
14 country sites**

About Avanade

Avanade provides business technology services that connect insight, innovation, and expertise to help customers realize results. Avanade partners with its customers to deliver Microsoft-based solutions using an open, collaborative approach that enables organizations in all industries to improve performance, productivity, and sales.

Avanade has grown to more than 10,000 professionals in 60 locations worldwide, including delivery centers in India and the Philippines. It has a thriving information management and collaboration service line that features SharePoint Server–based solutions and services.

Business Situation

The services offered by Avanade as well as its successful customer engagements have expanded tremendously over the past few years, and with a recent refreshed brand, the timing was perfect to launch a new website.

“Our current and prospective customers need to perceive us as technology leaders, so we needed to create a world-class website to deliver the best possible brand impression,” said Lynn McCann, Vice President of Global Marketing at Avanade. “Once that positive brand impression is created, the website needs to quickly get visitors down the right exploratory path so that they check out Avanade’s services and determine how they align with their needs.”

Avanade’s research revealed that the overwhelming majority of technology and business decision makers consider a visit to a potential technology partner’s website a crucial part of the evaluation process. “We know from experience that even our own customers turn to our website first to learn about our full range of services before reaching out to their Avanade account manager” said McCann.

The website therefore plays a crucial role in acquiring new customers and deepening Avanade’s relationships with existing accounts. Avanade needed a website user experience that convinced prospects and customers alike that Avanade is the best choice for a wide variety of services and solutions.

Customers and prospects aren’t the only target audiences, of course. Avanade is constantly seeking out the best and brightest talent to join the ranks of its service delivery professionals, and job seekers turn to the site to learn about career opportunities. They, too, need to have a favorable impression and be convinced to dig down into the careers content and learn the Avanade story—it’s a great place to work, learn, and accelerate careers

The new site needed to meet the user experience expectations of a web-savvy audience. Rich Silverlight-enabled content, including personalization options and community-building functionality such as blogs, RSS feeds, and discussion forums will be incorporated into the visitor’s experience.

It was important that search engines delivered current and prospective customers to the new site. “We know from analyzing our search engine reports that awareness can be created for our services on search engines, so we needed to ensure that the new site ranks at the top of search engine results for prospects and customers searching the web for specific technology services,” said Amy Beth Meier, Avanade website Manager.

And Avanade’s IT team needed to be able to seamlessly integrate back-end applications such as the employee recruiting application and the CRM systems.

The Solution

The new site is built on the Microsoft SharePoint 2010 platform, which allows for a rich, informative, and engaging user experience that brings the new Avanade brand to life. This new version of SharePoint includes powerful content management capabilities that make publishing new content to the site easier than ever, and allows integration of Avanade's existing back-end applications.

Due to Avanade's close relationship with Microsoft, Dave Mainer, Avanade ITS Service Architect, was able to preview the SharePoint 2010 platform before it was released to market. "We were invited to participate in Microsoft's Technology Adoption Program for SharePoint 2010. We could immediately see the power of this new collaboration and publishing platform, and used it to develop our intranet," said Mainer. "The successful launch of our intranet made the platform choice for our public-facing site a no-brainer."

Not only does the platform enable a rich and engaging user experience, it enables Avanade's Global Marketing team to keep the content fresh and relevant for 14 geographic sites in seven languages, empowering them to connect and engage with prospects and customers. Sharepoint 2010 provides the team with the content management tools needed to collaboratively develop content, preview before it goes live and post it after the appropriate internal approvals. "I love being able to create, preview, gather feedback and approval, and then publish new content—all within SharePoint 2010," said Meier. "We save time and money by not bogging down our IT team with content updates—we take care of those ourselves." Avanade's IT team can focus on functional website enhancements and future releases.

Avanade put together a team of internal resources, including key global marketing, delivery, and IT stakeholders, to develop the new site. The team turned to Seattle, WA-based marketing agency GreenRubino to create the design elements of the site, including the information architecture, taxonomy, visual design elements, and complete design documentation. "GreenRubino had the experience and design skills we needed," said McCann, "plus we wanted a partner that could collaborate closely with our team, and that's exactly what we got."

Results

Avanade's new website offers the rich, engaging user experience the company required to wow its customers, partners and recruits, while streamlining content management and development processes.

The crucial positive first brand impression is created on the home page, demonstrating Avanade's technology services leadership position. Three visually rich vignettes—powered by Silverlight—tell the visitor different stories that illustrate what Avanade offers, each with a call to action to encourage visitors to explore the site.

The new site features an intuitive navigational structure and an uncluttered user interface. Clear entrance points are presented for different target audiences, enabling visitors looking for detailed information to quickly navigate to specific solutions or case study content.

Clear calls-to-action are presented at appropriate times throughout the user experience—including contact choices, event registrations, and white paper downloads—giving Avanade a greater ability to develop and grow relationships with prospects and customers.

SharePoint 2010 content management features make updating and managing content easy. Each editor can work with their own language, keeping content fresh and relevant in all seven languages deployed in Avanade's 14 geographic sites.

Putting content management in the hands of Avanade's marketing team—where it belongs—frees up the IT team to focus on new features and future releases.

New metadata services in SharePoint 2010 enable Avanade's team to apply tags in order to deliver more context-sensitive content for visitors. The tags also optimize search engine rankings, driving crucial prospective customer traffic to the site.

"Our new website is creating the best possible brand impression for customers, prospects, recruits, the media, and other members of the global business community," said McCann. "We're thrilled with the outcome—it was a real team effort." The website showcases Avanade's leading-edge innovation on the Microsoft platform—in this case, SharePoint 2010—and helps our consultants demonstrate how the company delivers the latest technology.



About Avanade

Avanade provides business technology services that connect insight, innovation and expertise in Microsoft® technologies to help customers realize results. Avanade's services and solutions help improve performance, productivity and sales for organizations in all industries. Additional information can be found at www.avanade.com.

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