



Case Study

**ADA**<sup>®</sup>

# American Dental Association polishes its digital experience

A unified digital marketing platform  
enhances member engagement

**Do what matters**

Professional associations build strength and unity by promoting the economic, scientific and social well-being of their members. Whether it's continuing education, advocacy or licensing, these associations broaden the knowledge of a profession and the guidelines under which they operate. How well this intelligence is disseminated helps determine its true value. The American Dental Association took note of this as it embarked on a digital transformation to enhance the experience of the dentists it serves.

## **Business situation: Preventing the risk of a decaying site experience**

Since 1859, the [American Dental Association](#) (ADA) has promoted the art and science of dentistry by providing members of the US dental community with all the latest and greatest information on oral health and professional practice. Today, that exchange of information happens online. Whether it's booking conferences and reading up on recent research findings or managing membership benefits and purchasing products and services, the ADA website is designed to be a one-stop-shop for resources to enhance members' dental businesses.

Over the years, the collection of content grew and became dispersed among 13 unique websites managed by dozens of different teams, creating a disconnected digital experience that left both the ADA and its members frustrated. "We heard regularly that our members couldn't find what they were looking for," says Jenn Sutherland, senior director of digital transformation and visual brand at the ADA. "They knew the content was there, they just couldn't find it because it wasn't organized in an intuitive way."

To drive member engagement and loyalty, the ADA partnered with Accenture and Avanade – a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft – to help it transform the member experience by completely revamping its digital experience. While efforts began prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, the urgency of the work was accelerated as dental offices across the country sought guidance on safely serving patients during the pandemic.

## **Solution: Drilling down into digital connections**

Working together, the team began with a site audit, noting existing technical functions and content to understand the different member experiences at each touchpoint. Based on this assessment, Accenture Interactive held human-centered design workshops with dentists, dental students and ADA teams to create a user experience (UX) design and search engine optimization (SEO) strategy that would satisfy the particular needs of each member persona.

To put this plan into action, Avanade helped build a new site and membership hub using the [Sitecore Experience Platform](#) hosted in [Microsoft Azure](#). We remapped the ADA's content to give each page a defined focus and created a user interface (UI) design system that made call to actions clear and clickable.

**"Once we got into designing each section of the website, we would take our user designs back to our workgroup of dentists to gather feedback. It was very important to get that perspective along the way."**

– Jenn Sutherland

**Senior Director, Digital Transformation  
and Visual Brand, ADA**

We also developed 32 new components and templates to give content authors everything they need to build an unlimited number of pages with a consistent style, layout and imagery. This also enabled the content teams to properly tag content for easier searching and to set the foundation for future personalization. On the front end, fully interactive, cascading style sheets (CSS) support the most common devices and browsers, ensuring a seamless member experience.

## Results: All smiles with enriched interactions

The new dynamic, persona-based hub gives members access to content that's timely and relevant, keeping them engaged in the ADA's services and empowered to promote their patients' oral health. Page views increased by 7% and average time on the site rose by 14%. In addition, the ADA achieved cost savings with its call center, which has seen a dramatic reduction in questions related to the website, as users are able to find what they're looking for more easily. Importantly, membership marketing campaigns are seeing an increase in traffic and conversions to membership compared to previous years.

Benefits include:

- **Enhanced digital member experiences:** A benefit-driven membership hub puts the full value of the ADA at members' fingertips. Hundreds of surveyed members noted their satisfaction with the new site in comments like "love the new site."
- **Simplified access to content and user flows:** We reduced the number of navigation links from over 128 to 30 and updated the language to align to the specific needs of various member personas. This resulted in a 27% increase in the average number of pages each user accesses per visit and a 4.3% decrease in the bounce rate.
- **Improved content governance:** After retiring 90% of its content, the ADA site is now performing better. By creating a tagging structure and engaging a dedicated team to write and review digital content for strategic and targeted audiences, overall keyword rankings and organic traffic has increased. For example, the ADA's Dental Insurance Hub went from zero to 1,900 new ranking keywords after the new site launched.

With a site that delivers contextual, personalized experiences, the ADA is boosting member satisfaction and loyalty. Moving forward, we have continued to work with the ADA to redesign other digital properties including its consumer website, [MouthHealthy.org](https://www.mouthhealthy.org), to reflect the enhanced brand image and integrate all with Microsoft's [Customer Service](#) solutions.

### About the American Dental Association

The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing 161,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly *The Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA)* is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit [ADA.org](https://www.ada.org). For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA's consumer website [MouthHealthy.org](https://www.mouthhealthy.org).

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#### About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital, cloud and advisory services, industry solutions and design-led experiences across the Microsoft ecosystem. Every day, our 60,000 professionals in 26 countries make a genuine human impact for our clients, their employees and their customers. Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at [www.avanade.com](https://www.avanade.com).

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