Case Study

Improved customer experience with new VELUX online shop

The VELUX Group needed a new, flexible, interactive online shop to improve their customers' experience. Avanade used the latest cloud technology to deliver it.

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Business situation

VELUX A/S is a Danish company that specializes in Roofwindows and skylights. The 10,000-person company sells its products in 40 countries.

The company has an e-commerce site to sell blinds that fit its windows.

It was originally built in 2001 and by 2011 it had become "obsolete and inflexible," according to Sven-Eric Nilsson, Head of Global e-commerce.

The site was not very user-friendly but, more importantly, it lacked certain key functionality. For example, it was not easy to update, didn't support marketing activities, didn't integrate well with other IT systems such as stock control and it lacked an easy-to-use configurator to help customers find the right blinds.

The result was that the company was losing potential customers because customers would choose a product and then find it wasn't available for some reason.

The VELUX Group started Project Picasso to create a new, flexible, state-of-the-art e-commerce platform that would improve profitability and, as Nilsson puts it, "enhance the customer experience".

Avanade solution

The project began with a proof of concept in 2011 and full-scale development work began in October 2011. The first version of the site went live in Denmark in May 2012 with other national sites arriving soon after.

Avanade and Accenture's initial proof of concept helped the VELUX Group decide to replace their Oracle solution. The conclusion was to do a custom-built solution using Microsoft cloud; Windows Azure.

The VELUX Group, Avanade and Accenture agreed on using a small but highly-experienced team using the SCRUM Agile approach.

Avanade and Accenture provided the underlying engine for the site, using the VELUX Group's existing Joomla-powered content management system to take care of the front end.

It allows the front-end websites to get product catalogues, manage baskets, check inventory, take payments and configure different combinations of blinds and windows. It also makes it easy to administer the product catalogue and create special promotions and campaigns.

The new system delivers a better user experience for customers and VELUX staff alike.

"Avanade did an EXCELLENT job. They put the end-users' needs at the centre of their work and the engines and product configurator they built is of extremely high quality."

— *Sven-Eric Nilsson*
Head of Global e-commerce,
VELUX A/S

"We didn't have a full specification when we started and that was on purpose. We went forward in sprints using the SCRUM Agile approach. I'm extremely pleased with the flexibility we have today."

— *Sven-Eric Nilsson*
Head of Global e-commerce,
VELUX A/S

Business benefits

The VELUX Group's new state-of- the-art e-commerce system delivered major improvements, including:

- **Improved customer experience**. Previously customers might spend several minutes trying to find the right blinds for their windows only to find they were out of stock. The new system helps the user configure their blinds interactively based on in-stock items.

- **Fewer abandoned sales**. The old system saw a to high amount of users give up their purchase because the system was not responsive or easy to use. With the new system sales have increased and fewer customers give up.

- **Rapid multinational roll-out**. The new site supports multiple countries, shops per country and languages per shop making it very flexible and easy for the VELUX Group to deploy it in its 40 national markets. It's already live in Denmark, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Norway and Poland.

- **Increased sales through resellers and partners**. The system also supports multiple shops per country, allowing relevant resellers to embed a VELUX blind selector into their own website, increasing potential sales.

- **Better support for special offers**. The new system is more flexible when it comes to marketing campaigns It allows different territories to run their own marketing campaigns, including the ability to offer special bundle products

- **Flexible content management systems.** The new system lets local business units update their own content, making it much more responsive to local needs and optimising the site for different markets.

- **High-performance, resilient and scalable.** The new system runs on the cloud using Windows Azure. This makes it much less likely to suffer service interruptions and easier to scale up without sacrificing performance.

- **On time.** Thanks to the innovative Agile approach, Avanade delivered the site on time .

These improvements directly contribute to the VELUX Group's profitability. For example, conversion rates increased up to 30% on the new shop.

The project was a success and delivered much-needed improvements.

"Avanade brought a highly-skilled team to the project," says Sven-Eric, "and they helped us create a flexible, high-quality online shop."

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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