Case study // **RAC Western Australia**

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Own the experience

Motoring and member services leader RAC Western Australia (WA) increases sales and brand halo effect using machine learning.

Industry: Motoring, member and financial services • **Founded:** 1905 • **Employees:** 1,400 **Headquarters:** Perth, Western Australia • **rac.com.au**

RAC is a membership organisation representing the interests of more than 1 million Western Australians. RAC also advocates to protect and enhance the lifestyle of its members with a focus on reinvesting profits to benefit both members and the WA community.

In addition to being a member organisation, RAC also provides a number of products and services to members including auto services, batteries, financing, insurance, roadside assistance, security, tourism and travel services, and tyres.

RAC WA's 1 million members are responsible for around 8,000 interactions every day on the RAC website, with approximately 20,000 invoices being sent and paid on the platform every month.

Digital transformation leads to true CMS with mobile responsiveness

Beginning in 2014, RAC went through a technology revolution as part of a three-year digital transformation. At the time, the existing web platform had been identified as not fit for RAC's needs, and several replacement solutions were considered during a review.

"Following an extensive pitch and testing process, Sitecore was selected because of its ability to provide personalisation, customisation, and mobility, as well as integration with the Microsoft Azure cloud and machine learning products," said Richard Quance, senior manager, Digital UX, RAC WA.

Quance said that Sitecore was a true CMS with mobile responsiveness—and far more than that. He observed that functionality and customer service changes, which would have taken weeks in the existing website platform, could be performed in a matter of minutes using Sitecore. As a result, in the past three years, there has been a 30% increase in mobile users on the RAC website with mobile traffic now outstripping desktop.

Challenges

- Use machine learning with data analytics to suggest the most relevant product/service for members after they complete a transaction—traditionally a high exit point
- Increase member retention, improve member experience, and determine if making it easy for members increases likelihood of upsell and cross sell for new products and services
- Deliver personalisation and mobility functions on the rac.com.au platform

Solution

- Sitecore® Experience Platform
- Microsoft Azure Machine Learning Platform

Results after 6 months[1]

- Improvement in engagement post transaction with: 4% reduction in the exit rate
  - 10% increase in time on site
  - 5% increase in pages viewed
- Savings in marketing expenditure in a month generating
  - 62% increase in motor insurance quotes
  - 44% increase in home insurance quotes

Microsoft

"We achieved a 4% increase in website retention rates and 62% increase in motor insurance quotes, and it all comes down to the integration of Sitecore with Azure's machine learning capabilities."

— Richard Quance, Senior Manager, Digital UX, RAC WA

"What we've discovered is that focussing on providing an easy-to-use customer experience can trump product and pricing," he said. "A recent ADMA[2] report cited that nine out of 10 users will pay more for a service if the experience is easy, with one out of 10 paying up to 50% more."

And with Sitecore's ability to integrate with key behind-the-scenes technologies, including a Microsoft Dynamics CRM system, enables it to provide an even better customer experience by supporting features like chatbots and voice search.

"With Sitecore we can address projects quickly, easily, and with minimal project costs and resource overhead," Quance said.

Sitecore—integrating experience with machine learning

RAC investigated the use of machine learning concepts, tools, and techniques in driving member acquisition, retention, and share of wallet. As a proof of concept, RAC digital and information technology teams in partnership with Ignia, their technology implementation partner, developed a recommendation engine for products and services, surfaced through the public-facing RAC WA website.

For example, the website now offers a different experience for members paying a roadside assistance bill compared to an interaction with a call centre or an in-person visit at a member service centre. In those situations, customer service representatives could initiate a conversation with the member once the bill was paid to determine if additional services would suit their needs.

They soon realised that the machine learning component could be quickly and easily integrated using Microsoft Azure. The machine learning functions of Azure could rapidly evaluate which services a member was already subscribed to and offer them additional services on the exit page once the member had paid their bill.

"The result was an increase in retention rates on the 'thank you' page, and it all comes down to the integration of Sitecore with Azure's machine learning capabilities," Quance said. "This project harnessed the power of Sitecore and Azure. And by personalising a customer's experience based on their interests and purchase history we proved that customers are willing to move from a transactional mindset to an engagement mindset when they are paying a bill on the website."

Quance is confident that machine learning capabilities have demonstrated that they provide a halo effect that puts additional RAC services into play and results in more RAC services being purchased by its loyal members.

"Our hypothesis is that the more tailored a service is to the member's needs, the more likely they are to buy it," he said. "The general manager of sales and members services is very pleased with the results that we have been able to show to date. This proof of concept with machine learning has completely validated the use of Sitecore as the strategic platform for our web business."

Gold Implementation Partner

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Website

ignia.com.au

References

[1]Since launch in November 2017, on a limited set of data

[2]ADMA – The Business Case for Customer Experience - https://www.adma.com.au/resources/the-business-case-for-customer-experience 10th October 2017

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