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Engineering Catalog Experience for South Africa Based Large Automobile Distributor

BUSINESS SCENARIO:

The existing web ecosystem of our client which comprised of an internal administration portal and dealer dashboard systems, had significant deficiencies and repeatedly failed to keep up with technological trends, resulting in need for an upgrade. Further, each of their three major systems of entire web ecosystem namely, Customer Front-End Website, Dealer Dashboard, Administration Portal were slow and often unresponsive to requests and inept to meet the demands of client's wide network. Together, these were leading to heavy losses and straining the company's bottom-line. Thus, since their system were running in legacy mode, lacked robustness and required technology makeover, they chose Cygnet Infotech as their backend development partner.

They were in dire need of an enhanced catalog management system across all the 3-major systems, thus, they sought to:

- Develop a **Customer Facing Website** on a new technology stack to enable dynamic microsites (for dynamic filtered view) where customers can view the client's stock and generate inquiries for vehicles, trigger request for test drive or buy a used/ demo/new car.

- Develop an **Administration Portal**, with restricted access to admins located at head-office or across the country. Admin to have access to CMS (Customer Management System), DMS (Dealer Management System) together with a consolidated reporting view of dealership catalogue management performance, the ability to manage content across the entire web eco-system, manage master-file data (such as brands and models), manage (to add/ edit/ update) dealerships, setup campaigns and special promotional offers and assign them to applicable dealers.
- **Dealer Dashboard** to be rebuilt with a new technology stack to allow HQ to amend it easily, streamline scorecard metrics. It was also required to allow dealers to enrich their vehicle stock listing, view their performance against headquarter stipulated targets (generate weekly/ monthly/annual reports), and feature to opt into countrywide special promotional offers and campaigns.

PROJECT DETAILS

- **Customer:** Largest Auto Retailer and Distributor
- **Country:** South Africa
- **Domain:** Automobiles
- **Solution:**
 - **Technology:** PHP 7.0, Apache 2.4.18, HTML5, CSS, jQuery
 - **Framework:** Laravel 5.3
 - **Presentation Layer:** Bootstrap3, jQuery
 - **Database Server:** MySQL
 - **Version Control:** GIT

CYGNET'S SOLUTION:

By offering a complete suite of catalogue management, we helped the client track, distribute and process the orders in real-time and update order enquiries regularly. Cygnet's senior business analyst specially went onsite to client's location for client requirement workshop to understand existing shortfalls and challenges with client's current eco-system. Cygnet overcame the cultural barrier by in-depth analysis of their culture, their business approach and provided complete offshore and on-shore support to the client despite time-zone barriers. Key highlights of the critical delivery were:

- **Exclusive Workshops:** Cygnet conducted three workshops with stakeholders from dealership and headquarters. Storyboard was utilized to elicit pain-points from users of internal administration portal and dealer dashboard systems.

CLIENT'S PROFILE:

Our client is the largest auto retailer and distributor in South Africa for new, used and demo vehicles. As national representatives of over 40 dealerships across South Africa, they are one stop destination for end-to-end car supplier of top brands along with car insurance and car finance services.

- **Websites:** The new website was rebuilt using Microsoft technology stack because it offers a good balance between development time and functionality. The stack further included ASP.NET MVC for its versatile powerful features, intuitive Bootstrap 3 framework, jQuery, object relational mapper Entity Framework and the open-source AngularJS front-end web application framework. This also enabled the *Deal Sites* (Microsites) to become a filtered view of the main site.
- **Deal Sites Assisting Seasonal campaigns:** Region or brand specific microsites functionality setup was introduced to facilitate specific filtering of the catalogue system to provide for special deals/ brands to help customers view stock, generate leads, book test drive and read on specific content tailored towards the manufacturing brand.
- **Dealer Dashboards:** Cygnet's team rebuilt the *Dealers Dashboard* from ground-up. Dealers could now access the client's website to display scorecard for dealer's performance against HQ's set targets, notification for business rules, leads generated, special promotional offers (quarterly/ monthly/ weekly/ daily) and latest vehicles in the system. The team also introduced notification system through emails to track and monitor vehicle aging. Introduced a special Dealer Dashboard, Noticeboard, Dealership Profile, Support to allow users to raise ticket. Also introduced were Showroom functionality for dealership users, *Priced to Go* functionality to automatically adjust price of automobiles, *PDF manager* to automatically create PDF brochure of the vehicle.
- **Administration Portal:** Cygnet's team worked to provide consolidated reporting of dealership catalogue management performance to admins in the administration portal. It allowed them to determine the various data views they required to see on the system. With the added functionality, admins could now manage special promotional offers and campaigns (Brand-wise/ Region-wise) and publish it to applicable dealers and available stocks. A new feature was specially introduced for authorized users who had access to administration portals at the HQ, to expedite access to information they wanted to see. With the **Slice-and-Dice reporting tools** they could develop useful and relevant reporting as and when needed. The self-service reporting model allowed users to create ad-hoc reports from systems data.

Integrated CMS (Customer Relationship System), LMS (Lead Management System) and DMS (Dealer Management System) for Better Lead Allocation and to Avoid Duplication:

Cygnet team proposed integration of Lead Management System (used by the client to prospect, receive and collate leads received by dealers and their staff thereon send the relevant leads to applicable users) with CMS (the widely used Customer Relationship for effective management of customer records) to avoid duplication of leads from 3rd party aggregators, which earlier often made lead reporting difficult. In the new system, Leads were fed into Lead Management System via an XML feed and then allocated to the respective dealers on CMS.

BENEFITS TO THE CLIENT:

The upgradation of catalogue's system comprising of websites, new *Dealership Dashboards*, *Deal Sites* and *Administration portal* completely reinvented a new experience level for dealers and users.

- Cygnet's catalogue management solution expedited the system responsiveness by seamlessly streamlining all the six major components of the client's web ecosystem

- Eliminated duplication of leads from dealers, staff and 3rd party aggregators by integrating Lead Management System, CMS and DMS
- Increased gross sales by 28% and achieved 50% increase in customer satisfaction
- HQ administration can now manage catalogue ecosystem in its entirety and manage special promotional offers based on brands and dealers across the nation
- Better dealer management allowed them to rope-in new dealers
- New dealership dashboard boosted productivity and efficiency of dealers
- Increased productivity and communication by overcoming the current shortfalls and challenges of previous generation web eco-system
- Intuitive dynamic microsites saw a massive increase in more than 35% online traffic
- Fast and user-friendly search functionality on website now allowed users to easily locate dealers and best-deals on new/ used/ demo cars
- Makeover of Dealers Dashboard resulted in accurate reporting and real-time reporting



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