

**NUCLEUS
RESEARCH**

RESEARCH NOTE C17

ROI ANALYSIS YOU CAN TRUST™

ROI Profile: Microsoft Content Management Server Ford.com

THE BOTTOM LINE

Ford.com achieved a positive ROI from its migration to Microsoft Content Management Server by reducing IT and management costs while improving content producer productivity.

ROI: 115%

Payback: 11 months

THE COMPANY

Whether you're looking for information on pickup trucks or a Land Rover, or financing a car purchase, you can probably find what you're looking for at Ford.com. Ford.com is the corporate portal for the Ford Motor Company and was designed to enable users to rapidly access the information they need about Ford vehicles, services, and companies as well as Ford corporate and investor information.

THE CHALLENGE

Ford launched Ford.com in 1999 using content management software from another vendor, with which Ford planned to develop a partnership to support Ford's e-commerce-related software and strategy. The company rapidly found that the lack of maturity of the solution meant that its day-to-day performance did not meet the needs of its Web site.

Because it was a Java application running on a Windows platform and because it was a relatively new solution, stability was an ongoing problem, and flexibility was an issue as well; making changes in content was time consuming and took a high level of technical skill. Ford.com needed a content management platform that could reliably support the level and detail of content on the Web site while enabling users to rapidly and easily update that content on a daily basis.

THE STRATEGY

In May 2001, Ford.com began looking for a new content management platform to support its Web site. The company considered a number of content management options and developed a list of functional requirements to evaluate the different options. Ford.com ultimately chose CMS because of Ford's existing relationship with Microsoft and Microsoft's willingness to devote consulting and technical resources to ensure the Ford.com deployment of CMS was a success.

In September 2001, Ford.com's technical team began learning about CMS and planning the migration. The migration of more than 850 pages of content was completed in two months utilizing the expertise of Microsoft consultants; personnel from Ford's creative agency, Razorfish; and Ford's internal IT staff. At the same time, Ford.com moved its Web site from an external hosting partner to Ford's internal application center. The new CMS-based Ford.com was launched on December 15, 2001.

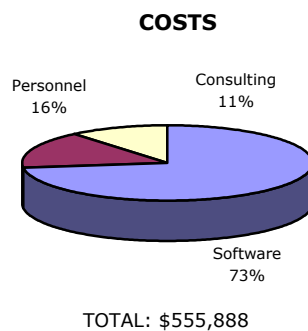
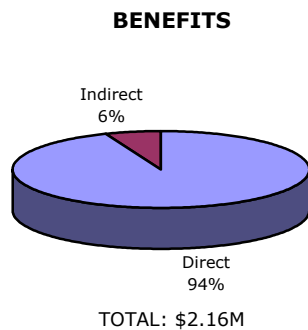
Ford.com has two internal content producers and one Razorfish consultant responsible for developing content for the site and initially had planned to send them to extensive training to learn how to use CMS. However, after initial experience with the CMS Web authoring tools it found that limited training was necessary to understand how to develop and publish content effectively, so planned training time was reduced.

Ford.com's first big test of the Content Management Server was the North American International Auto Show the second week of January. It found the Content Management Server could support the content needed including streaming video, and that site content producers were able to rapidly update Ford.com to parallel auto show announcements.

KEY BENEFIT AREAS

Migrating Ford.com to Microsoft Content Management Server has enabled the company to maintain a high level of service for Ford.com visitors while reducing the time and expense needed to keep content up to date. Key benefits Ford.com realized include the following:

- Improved IT management. Moving to a more stable platform enabled Ford.com to move to an internally hosted application while reducing ongoing IT support and administration and site management costs.
- Increased employee productivity. Using simpler tools and a more rapid content development and publishing process has saved time for the employees producing content and enabled them to further enhance the content available on the site without additional cost.
- Flexibility. The ability to rapidly change and flexibly roll out new content has enabled Ford.com to more effectively manage the content on its site in response to changes in its business and in customer demands. Direct 94% Indirect 6% Figure 1 - Direct and Indirect Benefits



KEY COST AREAS

The largest cost area of Ford.com's investment in Content Management Server was software. However, because the project was undertaken to replace an existing content management solution, Ford already had personnel in place to manage and develop content, so their costs were not included in the calculation.

LESSONS LEARNED

Because Ford.com needed to rapidly move its Web site to the new solution, it decided to structure content templates as quickly as possible, and is now revamping some templates that were initially developed to better meet ongoing needs. An organization launching a new project without such time constraints would likely spend somewhat more time in development but would need less ongoing development investment.

Ford.com makes frequent changes to its content and often needs to review former versions of the site, so it has separated its authoring environment from its production environment. The company is still exploring how it can manage versions of Web content as well as search content currently published to further reduce ongoing production and management investment. The company is also considering how it can

better manage content contributor roles in CMS so that it can delegate content development projects to different users and the various business owners within Ford.

CALCULATING THE ROI

Nucleus Research calculated Ford.com's net benefits from moving from its old content management solution to CMS. Because it already had some development and management personnel, their ongoing costs were not included in the cost calculations of the analysis. Net benefits calculated included direct savings in support, management, and development costs. Indirect benefits from increased content producer productivity were calculated based on the employees' fully loaded cost. Hours saved were multiplied by a correction coefficient to account for the inefficient transfer of time to determine increased productivity derived from time saved.