

Professional Travel Agency Selects SitePal to Differentiate Its Site During Recession



Case study #19: World Voyager Vacations

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ABOUT WORLD VOYAGER VACATIONS

Located in Federal Way, Washington, World Voyager Vacations (www.worldvoyager-vacations.com) provides professional travel services for cruise and land vacations. The company offers three specialized Web sites that meet the unique interests of individuals and companies seeking vacations or conferences at sea.

THE LANDSCAPE

World Voyager Vacations has seen a significant downturn in business as a result of the current state of the economy. The leisure travel industry is one of the many industries that has taken a hard hit during these tough economic times, as many people are continuing to cut back on traveling. "We have seen a much higher number of cancellations due to job loss and also by those who have recently retired who had scheduled longer, more expensive trips and have watched their retirement accounts get ravaged by the stock market," said Jerry Vaughn, president of World Voyager Vacations. **"Many of our customers have put their travel plans on hold until things change, while those who are still choosing to travel are spending a lot less than they did in the past."**



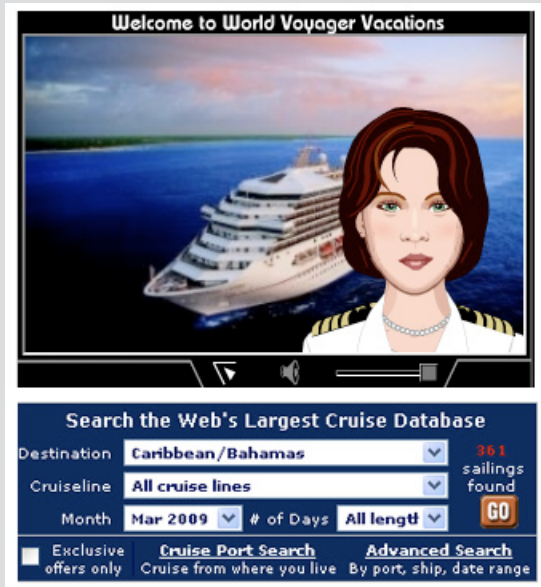
BUSINESS CHALLENGES

The folks at World Voyager Travel felt that differentiating its Web sites from its many competitors and re-boosting the consumer confidence was a key to staying ahead of the curve in this sluggish economy. "The travel industry is one of the most competitive on the Internet, It's very important to make your Web site unique so that visitors will remember who you are and return." said Jerry. He also believed that if he could speak to potential customers through his Web site he could instill a level of confidence that would prove World Voyager Vacations was the right company for the job. "Over the years we have learned that our business is all about building relationships and that most of our Web business is driven by our site visitors picking up the phone, calling us for more information and booking trips."

SOLUTION

Jerry achieved his goal after learning about animated speaking characters from SitePal. **"In this day and age, every Web hit counts and SitePal looked like it could help us communicate effectively with the customers to support the written material we already had on our site,"** said Jerry.

Visitors to World Voyager Vacations are now greeted on the company's homepage by a SitePal avatar who explains the recommended step-by-step process one should take when booking a vacation with the company. The company also uses multiple SitePal avatars on its various product pages that effectively walk customers through the vacation purchasing process.



The screenshot shows the homepage of World Voyager Vacations. At the top, it says "Welcome to World Voyager Vacations". Below this is a large image of a cruise ship on the ocean, with a SitePal avatar of a woman in a white uniform and a pearl necklace overlaid on the right side. Below the image is a search bar titled "Search the Web's Largest Cruise Database". The search bar has several dropdown menus: "Destination" set to "Caribbean/Bahamas", "Cruiseline" set to "All cruise lines", "Month" set to "Mar 2009", and "# of Days" set to "All length". To the right of the search bar, it says "381 sailings found". Below the search bar are two buttons: "GO" and "Exclusive offers only". At the bottom of the search bar, there are two links: "Cruise Port Search" and "Advanced Search".

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- Jerry Vaughn, President of World Voyager Vacations



RESULTS

Jerry believes that **SitePal has increased the number of new customer leads by 25% and has helped make his company stand out from the crowd, which is particularly important during the current state of the U.S. economy.** He also attributes SitePal to driving subscriptions to the company's electronic newsletter, which provides another means for the company to communicate with its customers.

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World Voyager Vacations plans to continue to use SitePal to provide its customers with outstanding service. The company is also looking into new ways to use SitePal to reach out to the visually impaired community. The company also believes that **using SitePal to establish its first "personal" contact via its Web site will be an important part of its Web strategy for a long time to come.**

ABOUT SITEPAL

SitePal is developed by Oddcast, a New York based company that has been developing and creating a wide array of innovative avatar products. Since 1999, Oddcast has powered many groundbreaking campaigns on the Internet and received numerous awards for its innovation. In 2003, the company introduced SitePal, an easy-to-use and affordable speaking avatar solution that is geared to empower small businesses. With its ability to engage site visitors and simplicity to use, SitePal has helped thousands of small businesses and organizations around the world improve their website performance by innovating the way to communicate with customers. To learn more visit www.SitePal.com