



CASE STUDY

Architecting the Collaborative Community

Defined Logic's Process and Programming Positions Magazine as Community Hub

The Client

Pure Contemporary (www.purecontemporary.com) is a new online magazine for residential contemporary design. With bountiful images, interactive design tools, interviews with the world's leading design visionaries, and a robust searchable, product guide, Pure Contemporary is fast-becoming the essential resource for consumers who demand high-quality contemporary. The magazine's goal is to enthuse and educate a growing consumer audience while serving as a vital marketing channel for the manufacturers who address this estimated \$6 billion market. The company is based in East Amherst, New York.

The Business Challenge

The contemporary design industry is a relatively small piece in a \$70 billion kitchen/bath/furnishings pie. As such, few magazines address these audiences – leaving both the consumer and the makers of these products stuck with buying broad-based publications. The challenge for Pure Contemporary was to create an informational portal that would generate and retain a strong following of readers to charge a premium fee for manufacturers to list their products and services.

"To attract and retain a sophisticated audience, a variety of editorial departments are needed – each with its own personality. Since contemporary furnishings are so difficult to find, a searchable product database was critical to the site's success," explains Diane Burley, publisher of Pure Contemporary. The database was also key to the business model – since vendors would be pay an annual fee to add, edit or delete products from their 'virtual' catalogs.

The challenge was that a prior development team had created two proprietary interactive products, but had fallen way behind schedule. Burley came to DefinedLogic frustrated with the loss of time and looking to make up ground. Her business model required the site be break-even in 18 months, yet the publishing tools hadn't been created.

The goals for DefinedLogic were threefold: to provide a strategic analysis on every feature of the site – and how it might support the bottom line; to create a publishing portal that was easy for a nimble editorial team to maintain; to develop a platform that would be expandable to support future growth and development.

DefinedLogic's Solution

A three-week investment in strategic planning gave Defined Logic and Pure Contemporary a much-needed perspective of where things stood, where they needed to go, and how they would get there.

The project scope included building a portal system that would accommodate access by three different audiences: the reader, the editorial team and the vendors. While access to the site was open to anyone, the interactive tools were reserved for readers who had registered. The editorial team required a robust set of administrative tools to allow PURE CONTEMPORARY to manage content, and the third set of tools was for vendors to update their company and product information.

With the clock ticking, DL began development with a leg up: it leveraged existing portal technology it had developed to quickly implement a basic feature set and solid architecture cost effectively. The existing feature set had been robust for document management – which was largely text based. But now, it needed to be expanded to support image management. Additionally, the platform was different than the one used for the legacy tools, so DL needed to oversee the migration of data from an SQL database to PostgreSQL.



"There were a few hurdles that needed to be overcome," explained Derek Riddle, DL project manager. "The code wasn't quite as flexible as we thought, and we needed to customize it to match the workflow of the editorial team. Secondly, Pure Contemporary's vendors are vastly different users than their editorial team. We couldn't assume that vendors had anywhere near the same level of knowledge and so needed to constantly re-think the interface to handle an unsophisticated user."

Project Background

The Pure Contemporary team was thrilled with its new tools. Editors were able to quickly create, edit and update articles, while the business development team was able to easily walk clients through the process of creating and maintaining their product profiles. The site, which officially launched in October 2004 – a mere 90 days after the scope was signed off on, logged more than 10,000 visitors in 6 weeks.

"I wanted the portal to define and supports the workflow for all our departments," says Burley. "Publishing relies on the collaborative efforts of different skill sets. The tool allows individuals to create, edit and store their respective elements within the database. This eliminates the chance of losing something in a hard-drive and makes the elements accessible to all personnel as it becomes available. It has allowed a very small team of editors to produce a very comprehensive magazine quickly and inexpensively."

To be successful in publishing, Burley adds, a magazine must be perceived as being a hub of useful information and discourse. "Most magazines fold because the financial burden of having an editorial team act as a gatekeeper for all information is unrealistic," she says. "By creating a series of publishing tools that allows information to come from the community and the editorial team, Defined Logic strengthened Pure

About DefinedLogic

DefinedLogic, LLC, is a professional services consultancy that delivers practical technology solutions based on each client's unique business requirements. The company's continued success is attributed to a consistent methodology and an experienced team of business and technology professionals who understand the need for efficient, comprehensive solutions to today's business issues.

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