

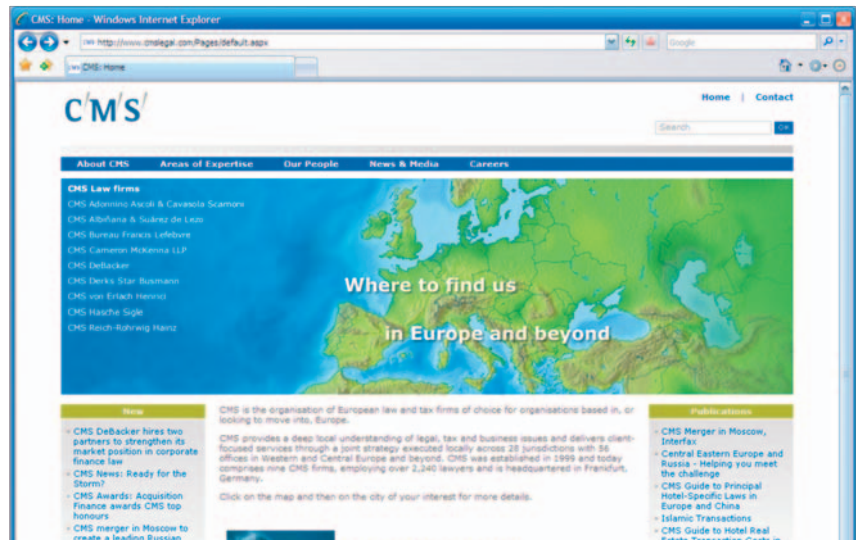
CMS Unifies Pan-European Brand Presence Using Hubbard One Web Technology

Leading European law organisation, CMS, has successfully created a unified, multi-lingual web presence for its nine member firms using the sophisticated legal web technology toolset from Hubbard One.

"Hubbard One's experience in implementing integrated legal marketing solutions on an international basis was a key factor in the partnership between our two organisations."

PETER SOMMER

Director of Brand Marketing,
CMS



In the time it can take a firm to launch one website, CMS has developed nine sites, using one content management system that is designed and built around the structure and specific needs of a large, multi-jurisdictional law firm. As a result the firm now has a consistent pan-European website that represents all the key services of its member firms and provides a single point of contact for the thousands of lawyers who work within the organisation.

CMS Director of Brand Marketing, Peter Sommer, says the web harmonisation project is part of a convergence strategy that aims to create a more unified and consistent corporate presence across its offices.

"While not wanting to become a fully integrated, single entity, CMS realised there were considerable advantages in placing more emphasis on a core set of centralised management practices, whilst retaining autonomy and ability to act at the local firm level, all aimed at delivering excellent service to our clients both locally and across borders."

Initiated in March 2007, the website harmonisation project sought to unify the organisation's online brand. Its goal was to develop a global website that provided a consistent face to the world, whilst allowing each of the local member firms to maintain control over their own content, in their own language. CMS's ultimate aim is to use their unified web presence as a central hub for extended marketing and business development activities, including email marketing, web advertising, and newsletter and media release distribution.

"The project was essential to reflect the changes occurring in our business model on the web," says Sommer. "The management of the organisation was becoming more focussed on closer collaboration and service offerings under the CMS brand and up until this point our web presence had been inconsistent. Each constituent firm had its own site which looked and acted differently from the others."

In order to provide visitors and clients with consistent information about CMS the firm needed to ensure that all its descriptions, service offerings and core brand values populated all the member sites and could be centrally managed through a flexible content management system.

"One of the key elements we wanted to introduce was cross-border searching and providing relevant information supporting each search result," says Sommer. "If a business prospect was sitting in Hamburg and needed to find out whether we had expertise in Madrid or elsewhere, we wanted the flexibility to be able to execute a search from our German office website and gain access to our pan-European contact base."

"Our goal was to increase cohesion and co-ordination amongst our firms, to ensure the clients knew the breadth and depth of the experience available to them throughout CMS and to provide a multi-lingual presence that suited each member firm's need. The challenge was building a system flexible enough to cope with this type of inter-connectedness, and treading the fine line between a centralised approach whilst retaining the autonomy and independence of each local firm."

Built entirely on Microsoft's SharePoint 2007 technology, CMS now has a website platform that allows information to flow effectively between and among its constituent firm websites, with all the content stored in a single database, delivering information to the right audience, on the right site and at the right time.

The websites' design, and all high level descriptive content about the practice and the expertise it offers across 16 different areas, is consistent across all the sites and centrally managed by a webmaster. Supporting this interface are second and third level content pages which differ from site to site depending on the experience and expertise of each local practice.

Each member firm has its own web manager who can access the content management system and has authority to accept, or reject, content for upload to their local site. The result is an online presence where information about CMS is available from any member site, and each site has the ability to tweak content to meet its localised needs.

"The tricky part of the project was developing a system with the flexibility to achieve integration between general and local content. Hubbard One was able to implement a fast, integrated content management system which provides us with a fully relational view of the content that exists across all the sites. It also provides us with a multi-lingual presence, as the majority of our constituent sites have content available in at least two languages.

"We wanted a site built on a Microsoft SharePoint platform in order to gain as much flexibility as possible for activities such as our marketing efforts. While the website is our core system, we plan to

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develop our intranet capabilities, and establish online client service centres. SharePoint provides the flexibility for all these services to interconnect and the Hubbard One content management system makes sure all the content is available for whatever end use is desired."

Another compelling feature of the site is how the fixed content can be supported with content feeds from the various member websites. Content flow is bi-directional and our brochure-ware, past jobs and partner biographies are easily updated and constantly available.

Sommer says the key to the success of the project was the selection of a supplier that had extensive experience in developing law firm websites, coupled with the sophisticated web toolset necessary to handle the flexibility that CMS wished to build into the presentation of its online content.

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ABOUT CMS

CMS Alliance (CMS) is an organisation of independent European law and tax firms serving organisations based in, or looking to move into, Europe. CMS provides a deep local understanding of legal, tax and business issues and delivers client-focused services through a joint strategy executed locally across 28 jurisdictions, 48 cities and with 56 offices in Western and Central Europe and beyond. CMS was established in 1999 and today comprises nine CMS firms, employing over 2,200 lawyers and is headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany.

CMS is the largest multi-jurisdictional firm in Europe offering a wide range of expertise through 16 core expert groups both locally and across borders.



ABOUT HUBBARD ONE

For more than 10 years, Hubbard One has delivered innovative solutions for law firm marketing and business development. Hubbard One provides creative, technology, consulting and implementation services for Web sites; proposal automation; experience management; relationship management; contact management; market analytics; and Intranets.

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