

Bell puts the Mint on online map.

The Customer

The Royal Canadian Mint is a Crown corporation responsible for producing circulation and non-circulation coins for Canada and other countries

The need

Implement a best-in-class, robust Web site designed on an ecommerce platform

The solution

Web Solutions Professional Services from Bell

The results

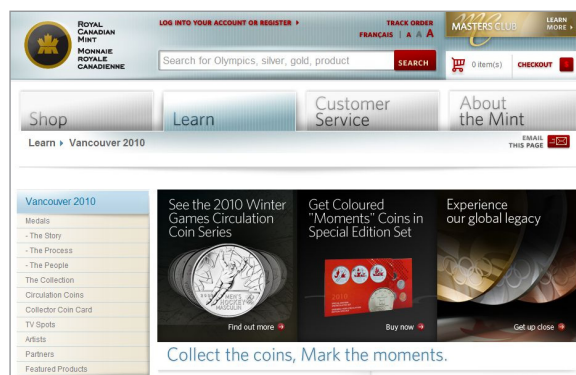
- Increased direct online revenue sales
- Improved user satisfaction
- Enhanced customer Web experience

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- Chris Carkner, Director, Ecommerce and Direct Channel Sales, Royal Canadian Mint

A best-in-class online experience is not the first thing that comes to mind when consumers think about the Royal Canadian Mint, a long-standing Crown corporation that has enjoyed a rich history of notable coinage innovations, with the “loonie” and “toonie” likely the most well known.

But a few years ago, the organization was faced with a harsh reality. A customer satisfaction survey revealed that customers were discontent with the Mint’s Web site, and scores on areas such as navigation, performance and content were well below industry benchmarks.




Screenshot of www.mint.ca

“We built a site based on what we felt our customers wanted,” said Chris Carkner, Director, Ecommerce and Direct Channel Sales, Royal Canadian Mint. “We didn’t do any usability studies involving our customers, which, in retrospect, was a mistake.”

Based on the customer satisfaction data, which included meager revenue trends, conversion rates and unique visitor statistics, the Mint decided to take a deeper dive into the issues by putting together a business case for a full “rip and replace” of its Web site.

After selecting Bell Web Solutions as their interactive agency of record, the Royal Canadian Mint elected to work with an ecommerce platform supplied by Art Technology Group (ATG). Having considerable expertise in delivering professional services on e-commerce platforms such as ATG’s, Bell Web Professional Services was engaged to develop the overall strategy, user-centred design and customized development for the Royal Canadian Mint’s Web site rebuild.





“We were looking for a hybrid solution provider – a company that could support us on the technical side and provide creative and e-marketing services. That’s where the unique offering came from Bell and differentiated them from others,” said Mr. Carkner. “Going through the due diligence process with Bell, we found there was a sound implementation methodology in place. Bell didn’t just look at it as a technology project. They wanted to learn our business, which I found very refreshing.”

To ensure that implementation and strategy is consistent from beginning to end, the Bell team matched up skill sets internally to the solutions being delivered. “We make sure to retain the same individuals on the project because the Royal Canadian Mint turns to us as their trusted advisor as we go through these processes,” said Samantha McDougall, Director, Web and Managed Services, Bell. “It’s imperative that we understand how the brand is going to be serviced online.”

The Bell team’s project execution began with building wire frames – a template of key pages of the Web site to illustrate their functionality. Some of the key wire frames were then converted into mock-ups, which illustrate the look and feel of the new site.

“As an integral part of the Bell methodology, we test the mock-ups on a series of users in order to get an early indication of success and check in with those who are actually going to use the site,” explained Ms. McDougall.

The Bell team used state-of-the-art eye tracking technology, which allows the tester to “see through the users’ eyes,” to find major obstacles within the proposed Web site flow.

“If the user has difficulty achieving their objective, then we’re not accomplishing our objective. At the end of day, our goal is to drive revenue through this Web site,” she added.

According to the Royal Canadian Mint, direct revenue from the Web site now accounts for 35 per cent, up by three to four per cent since going live with the new site. “We’re seeing a 17 per cent increase in sales revenue since the Web site launch and our unique visitors are up to 48 per cent. Another impressive data point is the customer satisfaction index, which rose from 59 to 78 per cent – higher than all the benchmarks seen across the ecommerce and government sectors,” said Mr. Carkner.

In addition to developing a more graphic-rich, easy to navigate and intuitive user interface, Bell included a personalization feature that enables the site to recognize the location of the user accessing the site and personalizes the information to match their specific profile. For example, a consumer logging onto the site from Québec would view Québec-based coins or region-specific promotions.


“From a creative standpoint, it’s much richer than before – it’s a modernized view of what the Mint is today without losing any brand attributes,” said Ms. McDougall.

While the new site was near flawless, the mere seven months of planning and execution were not without challenges. The timeline was aggressive: the project kicked off in the spring of 2008 and had to go live by the holiday season, the Mint’s busiest time of year.

“Typically you want a full year for this type of project,” said Mr. Carkner. “It strained resources but, thanks to Bell’s professionalism, we got it in on time.”

A second challenge was integrating the new site to the Mint’s existing backend system, which lives in a separate hosted facility. The Bell team and the Mint’s IT department spent a lot of time collaborating to get linkages in places so that the order process flowed into their Enterprise Resource Planning system.





While the Mint operates day-to-day content management, Bell provides ongoing Web site hosting, 24/7 support, search engine marketing and optimization as well as executing integrated campaign strategies such as the Veterans' poppy coin and the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

“The scope of knowledge and skill that Bell has in Web solutions and ecommerce was a great surprise,” said Mr. Carkner.

Bell offers a comprehensive suite of user-centric marketing and technology solutions for all online needs. Rapidly evolving technologies and user expectations demand that organizations evolve Web applications and online interactions. The Bell team of dedicated experts knows how to translate business requirements into technical specifications and effective designs.

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