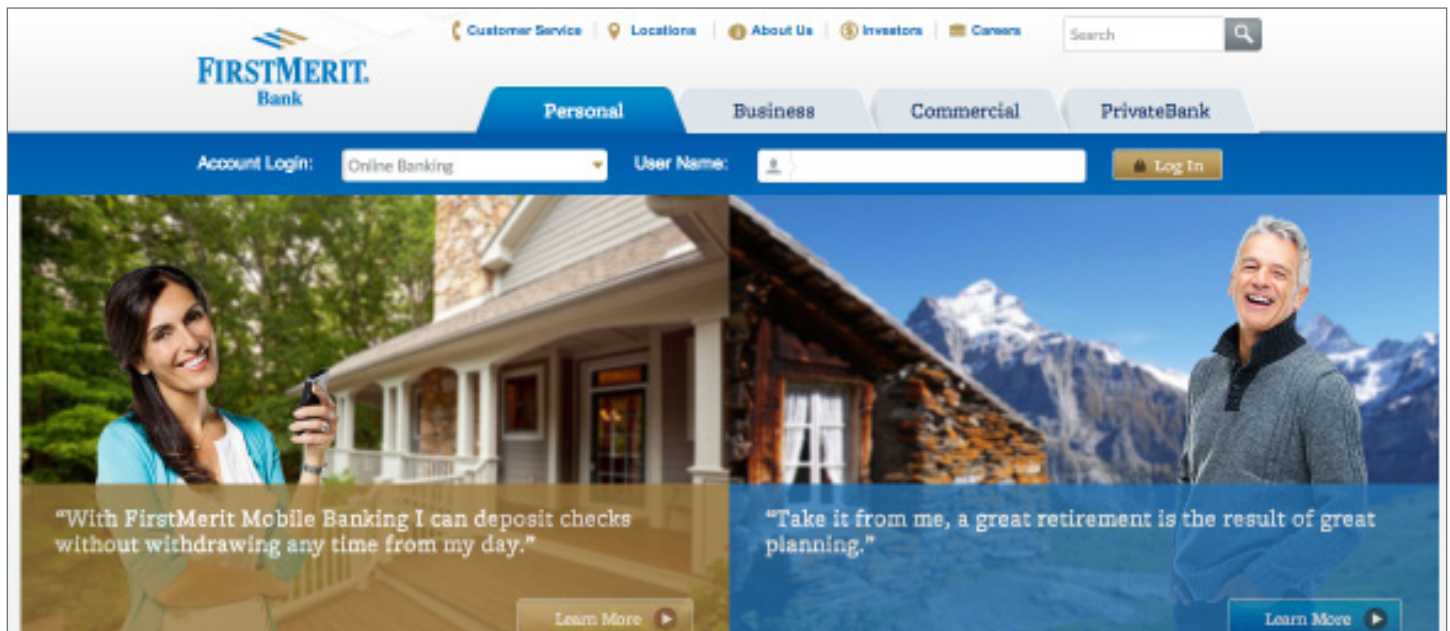


FirstMerit Bank Launches Award-Winning Website with Percussion

FirstMerit Bank had built a reputation for creating great experiences for its customers, but having an outdated CMS prevented them from carrying that experience into online media.



A Long Overdue Overhaul

The marketing team at FirstMerit Bank wanted to give the company's website a total overhaul, but the overall design wasn't their biggest problem. Not only was the existing CMS lacking and on the verge of no longer being supported, the marketing team wanted more control, and the website design didn't reflect their recently refreshed brand.

With Percussion CMS, FirstMerit Bank successfully rejuvenated their website, re-launched the brand through the website redesign partner Boston Interactive, and empowered their marketing team to update the website in real time, all while complying with the banking industry regulations.

Challenge: Migrate from an Unsupported Legacy System while Overhauling Online Presence

Running on a content management system that was about to no longer be supported was only part of the problem. No matter the size of the change, the IT department had to be involved in every update to the website. In the regulation-heavy banking industry, it's extremely important to serve customers with accurate, timely information, without layering additional reviews and revisions from varying departments in the process.

About FirstMerit Corporation

FirstMerit Corporation is a diversified financial services company headquartered in Akron, Ohio, with assets of approximately \$24.6 billion as of June 30, 2014, and 379 banking offices and 412 ATM locations in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Pennsylvania.

FirstMerit provides a complete range of banking and other financial services to consumers and businesses through its core operations. Principal affiliates include: FirstMerit Bank, N.A., FirstMerit Mortgage Corporation and FirstMerit Title Agency, Ltd. For more information, visit us at firstmerit.com.

FirstMerit's dedication to its customers is apparent, and reflecting that commitment through every communication channel, particularly its website, is a priority.



“We wanted the ability to go in and make changes to existing content but also have the ease of uploading images, PDFs, and creating templates ourselves. The marketing team needed to be able to do this independently versus always having to involve the IT department,” explained Drue DeMatteis, Digital Channel Manager at FirstMerit Bank.

For DeMatteis, ease of use translated to more than just being able to edit content, it was also about the ability to make layout changes, real-time search engine optimization, and tracking analytics as a Marketing team without depending on other departments.

FirstMerit had also launched a company rebrand the year before, but had not applied those changes to the style of the website—which was still stuck in the 7-year-old design. When a current or potential customer visited a bank location, they saw a very different brand presented to them compared to when visiting the website. This branding inconsistency was apparent to customers, employees and the industry overall. The FirstMerit team knew that not only was a new CMS necessary, but that an entire website redesign was needed.

Solution: Choose Easy to Use WCM System to Reduce Reliance on IT, and Go Live Faster

Enter Percussion. Drue DeMatteis was on the hunt for a system that could be easily updated and understood by the non-technical members of their team, but also had the ability to have version control on previous posts—a key feature necessary in audit trails for the banking industry.

A key feature selling feature of Percussion was the seamless partnership and enthusiasm for educating the FirstMerit team on using their new content management system. Not only was there an active team supporting FirstMerit’s CMS roll-out, but the tool itself presented a much easier way for Marketing to own every aspect of the website and keep it up to date with fresh content.

Outcomes at a Glance

- Fully responsive design that looks great on any device
- Consistent branding across online and offline marketing efforts
- SEO auditing and versioning tools already built in
- Marketing staff making changes on the fly, several times a week, without requiring IT assistance
- Ongoing updates of website no longer tied to IT timelines and priorities

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Outcomes: An Award-winning Website, Improved SEO, Responsive Design, and Increased Marketing Ownership


After working with the Percussion and Boston Interactive teams, FirstMerit launched the new website in March 2013. Soon after the launch, Boston Interactive and FirstMerit were named a winner in the Web Marketing Association's 2013 WebAwards, winning the 'Bank Standard of Excellence' Award.

The external response to the award-winning website was overwhelmingly positive, and the Marketing team is now easily publishing daily updates to the site. The ability for Marketing to work autonomously on the website freed IT to focus on more pressing initiatives.

"It's been good for us because we still involve the IT team for some more extensive pieces, but a lot of this daily work is something that we can do ourselves."

Beyond the teams who managed the website, employees across the company were pleased with the easy navigation and visually appealing features of the new website. "Internally there's a lot of appreciation and relief to have a site we could be proud of knowing it's a first impression for many customers," said DeMatteis.

The built-in SEO auditing tool lets site contributors know which meta data needs to be optimized prior to publishing, and version archives for each page ensure changes get captured at every stage for future auditing.

Another result that directly impacted customers: the website is now optimized for mobile devices with responsive design. No matter the device, FirstMerit customers can easily access and navigate the website on various tablet and mobile platforms, making accessibility to FirstMerit's website boundless. 



What's Next?

Like all forward thinking Marketers, DeMatteis is eager to expand the website's offerings, and can do so with features provided by CM1. Future website plans include: videos, demos, blogging and calculators – all with the objective of improving the customer experience overall.

With an easily adaptable and responsive website, an award winning redesign, and effective SEO tools in place, the website's capabilities will continue to further FirstMerit Bank's presence as an industry leader, and reaffirms their commitment to customer needs.

About Percussion

Percussion Software's award-winning web content management system is used by higher education, government agencies, and businesses to create effective websites and engaging content. Marketers use Percussion CMS to create, publish, and share content that drives web traffic, engages visitors, and looks great on any device. Percussion customers love our unique coaching program, drag-and-drop editing, built-in blogs, responsive mobile templates, SEO tools, and fast migration with LiveFirst. Launch your website in days instead of months. Take ownership of content, design, and go live dates because Percussion CMS is a product, not a platform. Leading customers include FirstMerit Bank, U.S. Social Security Administration, Norfolk State University, and Ceridian.



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