CASE STUDY

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APPLE WORLD

Namiki Yoshimi(left), Kozima Satoshi(right), APPLE WORLD

Introduced product
NOREN Content Server

Company information

Corporate name: APPLE WORLD CORPORATION
Foundation: December 6, 1991
Headquarters: 1-11-1 Nishi Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo Metropolitan Plaza 12th floor
Business Information: Personal Travel, Domestic / Overseas Travel Company Hotel Reservation
Number of employees: 47 (As of January 2015)
URL: http://appleworld.com/apl/index.html

Global Hotel Reservation APPLE WORLD 「Face of enterprise」 is in-house development & operation

APPLE WORLD, a travel agency that has been specializing in international hotel reservations and has been top in a niche market. I asked how the websiteand IT utilization are proceeding with that unique business model.

I-ON communications

■ Travel agency specialized in overseas hotel reservation

Please tell us about the business of APPLE WORLD.

The category of APPLE WORLD is 'Travel agency specializing in global hotel reservation but' unlike a large travel agency, we do not plan package tours, and we rarely book tickets. We offer "hotel reservation" service mainly.

You may regard our company as a global version of a domestic hotel reservation site such as Rakuten, Label and Ikyu(一休). You can find out the real-time availability of hotel rooms around the world and make a reservation.

APPLE WORLD website main page

■ Is it possible to check the availability of the hotels around the world in real time and make reservations?

Can we check the availability of hotel rooms around the world in "real time" and make reservations?

Yes, I will explain in more detail. You can do it for hotels located all over the world. Not only America, Europe, China, Southeast Asia but also Palau in the South Pacific, Trinidad and Tobago in South America, and hotels in Cuba can be booked online. What we do not cover is Antarctica, North Pole, and North Korea.

Hotel reservations can be made for local area as well as for major cities. In Spain, for example, you can book hotels in the smaller cities of Arcos de la Frontera and Avila, as well as the capital and big cities of Madrid and Barcelona.

Spain · Ávila search results
Spain, Ávila, 1 night from 8/1, single occupancy, 4 search.
Search time 4 seconds.

■ Real-time vacant room search

[It is possible to search vacancies around the world in "real time"] was the explanation. Is it possible to know the status of a overseas hotel far away from you in "real time"?

Yes, you can check the status in real time. Please regard real-time as within 30 seconds or so. For example, let's say you searched for available hotel rooms in Paris, France. When you search on condition that "I want to know hotel room which is available in Paris city on O Day O Month. Accommodation costs from O yen to about O yen", it checks 500 vacant rooms of contracted hotels in Paris in real time and shows the search results on the web in 30 seconds. How to use is almost the same as local hotel rooms search.

■ Exert power during peak season

How to get information on vacancy status in real time? Is it just inputting the vacancy data of each country into Japanese server every day as a batch processing or something? In that case, isn't it literally real-time status but just recent status?

You can have access to "real time" information. When we investigate the vacancy status, we have direct access to the servers in each country. When we investigate the status in Spain, we access the server in Spain. It is not entering vacant data into Japanese servers by batch processing or etc.

This real-time vacancy inquiry is effective in peak season of overseas travel. For example, during the fashion show in Paris and Milan, local hotels are also very busy. At that time, it would be convenient if you can find the hotel at once and make reservations online.

On the other hand, securing a hotel without internet is very difficult. You will have to call every hotel. When the soccer World Cup was held in Germany, hotels near the venue will surely be crowded, but people want to secure accommodation no matter what. The vacancy status changes hour by hour everyday.... In this case, searching for empty rooms -online would be a powerful way.

"Real-time search online is a powerful way" Mr. Namiki

■ CMS utilization for website operation based on confidence in contents

Why did you introduce the Web Content Management System (CMS)?

We decided to introduce CMS as we needed integrated management of content for distributed sites by XML. Contents currently posted on APPLE WORLD website can be re-used by public organizations such as embassies and tourist information centers, or various portal sites such as MSN or Excite. In this case, we need to customize content that fits to each site and if we do it manually, it would be too much of work. We use XML to address this challenge. Once you create a single piece of content, it will be deployed to the site where it will be posted, greatly reducing the manual work.

However, the use of XML requires some level of IT knowledge, which makes our employees feel more difficult to get the job done. With CMS, they can get control of content without a high level of IT knowledge.

Why did you recommend NOREN CMS out of many other choices?

After comparing various products, I learned that I could focus on the main business most with NOREN CMS. I'm working for a Media Planning and Production Department and "Production as a whole" is my job. Since the website is the "face of the company" that directly exposed to our customers, we should pay close attention to everything on the website such as configuration, layout, and texts.

One of our sales reps said, "This product is so flexible that I can make use of it freely for any website." Getting a complete control of something is a great. I personally think that "contents production" is my top priority and "site structure design" is the second in terms of website operation. Therefore, it is not good if we can't have enough time to concentrate on content creation while we also have to think about the site structure.

NOREN, however, I found it very easy to use with less IT knowledge. Even those who are non-techies can create a website if they have a little IT knowledge. Anyone who can use Windows and manipulate the file in Explorer can handle this well. I absolutely thought this product is good, and strongly recommend.

■ Any comment to NOREN?

I suddenly came to think about what would happen to APPLE WORLD in 10 years. We have changed from [company selling product via telephone] to [web company] in the past 10 years. There is no definite answer to the question of what kind of company we will become over the next decade. However, I believe we will hold IT as the main axis after 10 years. It means that there will be more opportunities to get support from the knowledge on how to use NOREN. I would like NOREN to give us continuous support and technological advice.