CONTENTSTACK™

Pella Opens New Doors with Contentstack's Headless CMS

50% REDUCTION
In development time

230% FASTER
Publishing content

50% FASTER
Launching a new site

ABOUT

Founded in 1925, Pella Corporation is a privately held window and door manufacturing company headquartered in Pella, Iowa, with manufacturing and sales operations in a number of locations in the United States.

SUMMARY

Pella couldn't keep pace with evolving technology due to the tightly coupled, monolithic front end in their existing system. Pella moved to Contentstack due to its flexible, decoupled architecture. Now Pella builds sites in a fraction of the time and integrates with Gatsby to improve site performance. Working with raw engineering, a strategic services partner, Pella also was able to make their sites ADA compliant.

THE CHALLENGE

Before Contentstack, Pella had sites primarily on a monolithic CMS. Pella was frustrated with the inability to customize layouts since changes required an extensive amount of development work. It was a tedious platform from a content perspective. Simple tasks were taking a long time. For example, when Pella had a new product launch, they wanted to set the new product apart from the rest of their other product lines and include unique highlights and callouts for the new product. The predefined templates constrained Pella since changes required four to six weeks of development work. Because of the tightly coupled monolithic frontend in their existing CMS solutions, Pella felt like they couldn't keep pace with evolving technology.

> "We're now building on this new solid, efficient foundation! The speed Contentstack enables Pella to get things done fast is what we needed. We are trying to deliver a breakthrough digital experience at Pella, and Contentstack is the foundation that allows us to do that."
>
> – Brad Postma, Senior IT Manager, Pella

THE SOLUTION

Pella either had to invest heavily in their current environment and try to improve the performance or make a move to a new platform. The decoupled frontend from the content management side was a primary motivation to move to Contentstack's headless CMS. Pella was confident that Contentstack would improve their performance.

Additional reasons that Pella went with Contentstack was the documentation and the responsiveness of the sales and support teams. Tod Hilton, the Senior Web Developer, says, "When Pella would run into problems, there was help right there at your fingertips. I ran into an issue on a Saturday afternoon that we couldn't resolve. So, I sent a message in the chat window thinking, they'll pick it up on Monday. In about two hours, I got a response back, saying they couldn't resolve the issue at that time, but they were looking into it. The next morning, I got the response back with the answer that I needed. The people at Contentstack were more interested in our success than the other vendors."

Pella felt like there would be a strong relationship as Contentstack continues to grow along with Pella's evolution and journey, as well as

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ensuring that Pella wouldn't get lost in a sea of thousands of other customers.

Marilyn Wichhart, Digital Content Curator for Pella, says when testing other systems, "I performed the same steps to do the same things and found that Contentstack was easier to understand and to set up. I remember not enjoying going back to work on our current CMS because it was so much easier to use Contentstack. I kept thinking about how much easier launching the new product line would have been. I was envious of all the things we could have done if we had Contentstack enabled at that time. I think from a content management perspective, Contentstack was everything that the current system wasn't."

From a developer's viewpoint, Kyle Kramer, Frontend Web Developer, says, "I think the documentation helps quite a bit. There's well-written documentation to walk you through everything. Even starting with test projects on my own, it was easy to pull down the API and work with GraphQL. It was smooth from the beginning, which was surprising. It was awesome!"

> "Contentstack is the best decision we ever made."
>
> – Tod Hilton, the Senior Web Developer, Pella

Using their previous CMS, it was cumbersome and time consuming to launch the new product. Pella had to hire an external developer who did nothing but build the pieces needed for the new product pages. After migrating everything into Contentstack, Pella was able to build whole sites in a fraction of the time it took to produce the new product pages.

It wasn't just swapping out the existing CMS to a headless environment; it was a complete overhaul of Pella's digital framework. Pella was impressed with the ease of onboarding. It was able to ramp up quickly with Contentstack and get the foundational framework in place and get their web presence moved over, which was a significant accomplishment.

Pella uses raw engineering, a strategic services partner that excels at Contentstack implementations. Wichhart gives credit to the raw

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engineering team for helping make Pella ADA compliant. "We were challenged about a year ago with getting all of our sites ADA compliant, which using our old platforms would have been a deal-breaker. Instead, we were able to do not only the main Pella site but several other sites in a shorter amount of time than before. With the help of raw engineering, we were able to move sites that we hadn't even managed before into Contentstack. Now all of our digital sites are completely compliant. That's a huge business goal that we didn't even know was going to be a driver for choosing a new CMS, but Contentstack enabled us to become ADA compliant!"

Postma points out that "Companies can be unsuccessful in implementing excellent products. I think the partnership we've been able to build with Contentstack and raw engineering has helped us have the success that we've had."

Pella is also using the static site generator, Gatsby, with Contentstack. This combination greatly improved site performance.

One feature of Contentstack that Pella loves and uses quite a bit is the Image API. This API enables changing the size and shape of images on the fly. Pella used to have to create up to four sizes of every image on our site, now they can use one image, and the API feature does all the resizing.

> "I was at a conference in San Francisco and was talking with different developers and designers. Quite a few of them were running into situations with their CMS and were frustrated about limitations. I said, 'Let me tell you about Contentstack. It's the answer to your frustrations with your CMS. Contentstack is the answer to all of it.'."
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> – Marilyn Wichhart, Digital Content Curator, Pella

IN SUMMARY

By moving to Contentstack, Pella is now publishing 230% faster, launching sites 50% more quickly, and has reduced development time by 50%. Working with the raw engineering team, Pella has been able to get all of their sites ADA compliant. Contentstack has proven to be a reliable, efficient foundation that has improved performance and helped increase the speed to market. Tod Hilton, the Senior Web Developer, sums up the move to Contentstack, saying, "It's the best decision we ever made."