



Case Study
June 2005

Self-Service Websites



Section 219, the home of Classic Sports Logos, is an online store that carries vintage-style t-shirts featuring the authentic old logos of teams and leagues of the past. Since 1997, Section 219 has provided customers with a huge selection of great-looking retro tees, superior service, and a rich database of historical information (www.section219.com).

The owner, Chris Anderson, began the project as a part-time effort and the company has steadily grown to warrant full-time attention. Chris began the effort using traditional methods, by contracting one of the thousands of solo web developers to build the site. This was done both out of convenience and to save money. Although the site was to have a maintenance capability that would allow Chris to make changes, he was never able to get as much done as desired due to limitations of the site and errors. Anderson's main problem centered on the inability to make changes as quickly and cost-effectively as desired. This was primarily due to his web resource being unavailable, non-responsive and too costly. Learning HTML, java and all the other techno requirements was not an option. Anderson said, "I often had to wait for changes to be made to the site for days, weeks or it sometimes never gets done". Eventually it got to the point where he stopped asking. This presented significant business issues because the web site was his only storefront and he was unable to enhance the capabilities to meet customer demands. The bottom line – Chris was losing ground and losing business. Anderson found the answer with Fluid Consulting and their unique web solution: self-service web sites (www.fluid-consulting.com).

Fluid Consulting informed Chris of their new method of empowering clients by setting up websites that are completely manageable and maintainable by the client. In addition, Fluid, with third-party tools, was able to provide Chris an almost endless selection of value added enhancements that no longer had to be 'built' by programmers but simply added by him. This was a very powerful and exciting opportunity to put the power and control of his business back into *his* hands. The opportunity was before him to break the painful cycle and allow him to make changes to the site without having to call his web developer to make each and every change.

After a short demonstration Chris's excitement was obvious, he was ready to change over to a self-service site. To begin the transition, Fluid Senior Consultant Tammy Tyson worked with Chris initially through a series of Discovery sessions to decide on the basic layout and 'look and feel' of the site, what in Fluid calls the site 'skin'. With the skin defined, Tammy then took the material and content from the current site and imported it over to the new site. Tyson said, "Changing the site to a self-service site is as easy as dragging and dropping the text from the old site to the new one". Tyson then worked with Anderson on initial configuration of the web site data, including logos, images and product pricing. Adding and changing content became very simple and user friendly. The new site works very much like a Microsoft Word document, so Anderson can simply type in the changes to the site himself. Anderson did not

need to learn HTML, java or any technical 'coding' to make the changes.

Anderson's new website not only provided self-service capabilities that he could update whenever he wanted, Fluid was also able to add some highly desired extra features that he thought were out of reach, such as a search engine, email blast newsletters, product association ('if you like this, you might like this'), featured products, and extensive reporting capabilities. The original and desired design of the site was able to remain intact, with just minor changes in the shopping check-out process. In addition, as Tyson points out, "Chris also has many different skins to choose from to change the look and the layout of the Web site instantaneously". Furthermore, Chris was able to see and test the changes to the site as they happened using a test site, eliminating the 'surprise' factor.

Once the site was completed, Anderson reviewed both the old and new websites with Fluid Principal Consultant Jay Pickett. Jay took Chris's feedback and made additional 'behind the scenes' changes and additions, such as allowing enhanced accessibility for search engines, support for other browsers, and keywords to ensure prominent display in searches. Once these changes were made, the site was ready to go live on June 6, 2005.

With the new site up and running, Anderson was able to depend on Fluid to work out any issues. For example, using the extensive reporting capabilities, Jay found a large number of sites were linking to the old Section 219 site. Jay was

able to re-direct customers to the new site and enhance the links. Anderson said, "All my customers came back, **plus more**".

Anderson said his favorite thing about the new website is that he has total control over any and all changes that need to be made. If he wants changes, it will take as long as he wants it to take. He now has the flexibility to make the changes when he has the time or needs them made. Chris said, "I will be saving a lot of time and money by not having to call an IT consultant anytime I want changes made". He also has a website that is far superior to his previous site, and the sales show it.