



Dow Corning

Enterprise content management enables global collaboration and stronger relationships with customers and partners

Benefits

- Repurposing existing content and leveraging existing investment enables accelerated delivery of website
- Common web architecture enables consistent web content across multiple business units
- Scalability ensures solution will meet global demands into the future
- Online collaboration enables distributed teams to work together more efficiently

Business overview

Dow Corning is a global manufacturer of performance-enhancing silicon-based products. Dow Corning develops, markets, and manufactures more than 7,000 diverse products and services to customers around the world, and more than half of the company's annual sales are outside the United States. A global leader in silicon-based technology and innovation, Dow Corning is equally owned by The Dow Chemical Company and Corning, Incorporated. Dow Corning's corporate headquarters are in Midland, Michigan, with more than 25,000 customers and 9,000 employees worldwide.

Challenges

With companies everywhere leveraging the Internet to maximize efficiencies and better serve their customers and partners, Dow Corning realized that it, too, needed to make it easier for partners and customers to do business with it over the Web. The company determined that completely redesigning its corporate website was crucial to forging stronger relationships with its partners and customers. Dow Corning needed to build its branded experience quickly while ensuring that its site content was current and relevant. The company realized that contribution from employees across the enterprise was crucial for ensuring high-quality content.

Deliver new website within three months

Due to competitive pressures and Dow Corning's continued quest to maintain its market leadership position, the company needed to reinvent itself with a compelling new business model focused on no-frills options for customers wishing to buy silicones in bulk. The best way to do that was to deliver a unique e-commerce website very quickly—within three months—and gain a competitive edge. The company defined an aggressive plan for development and implementation of its new business model and website design for the launch of www.xiameter.com in 2002.

Business profile

Dow Corning

A global leader in silicon-based products and services

Industry

Specialty chemical products and solutions

Geographies

Headquarters in Midland, Michigan, with 25,000 customers and 9,000 employees worldwide

Business solution

Enterprise content management, collaboration, web content management

EMC products

EMC Documentum content management platform, eRoom, Site Caching Services, Web Publisher

Deployment summary

Content management solution drives website supporting global business units; joins more than 150 EMC Documentum installations

Open standards needed to support existing investments

As a brick-and-mortar company moving aggressively into e-business, Dow Corning had existing processes, technology investments, and decades of content that it needed to consider in relation to the redesign. To leverage its existing investments and bring quality and exceptional customer service online, Dow Corning required a solution that supported open standards for enterprise integration.

Enable local control and global consistency

Each of the company's multiple global business units manages its own content. Dow Corning was concerned that, in the rush to publish content, the overall look and feel of the website would suffer from a lack of consistency. The company realized that it required a web content management solution that would ensure the consistency of the Dow Corning brand across the website while allowing business experts in each division to contribute content.

"As a global company, we are constantly looking for ways to improve and build consistency into our business processes. E-commerce is quickly emerging as a critical element of our business model, and requires us to enable business people to contribute content to the website and have a streamlined process for publishing," says Steve Hershauer, web content management and collaboration engineer at Dow Corning. "Our business is extremely diverse, and with such a wide product line and variety of markets, it had become untenable for IT to make every change to the website."

EMC Documentum solution

Based on its successful long-term relationship with EMC® Documentum®, Dow Corning selected the EMC Documentum enterprise content management platform to drive the content creation, publishing, and management for the new website.

Accelerated delivery of web content through repurposed content

With the EMC Documentum solution, Dow Corning can now repurpose content across its business units to maximize efficiencies. As a result, the company has accelerated the delivery of content to its websites. "Implementing the EMC Documentum solution has enabled Dow Corning to significantly reduce the time it takes to deliver content to the Web," says Hershauer.

With the EMC Documentum solution, Dow Corning built templates that facilitate the flow of content onto the website. "The templates are easy to use and enable content creators to focus only on the content," says Hershauer. "Now, employees enter the content within the template, and the system generates the output. It ensures consistency and speeds publication to the website."

Consistent web content across multiple business units

The delegated promotion and publishing capabilities of the Documentum solution accelerate the content review and publishing process. The individual content owners in each business unit have the ability to set specific timeframes. Once an approval is secured, the content is automatically pushed to the Web instantly or scheduled for delivery based on a specified effective date. Says Hershauer, “The Documentum solution ensures appropriate approvals and timely content publishing by the content owners themselves.”

The automated publishing capabilities and templates also ensure the consistency of all web content while enabling Dow Corning business units to manage their own content. “The EMC Documentum platform has enabled us to transfer the point of control from IT and placing the publishing function in the hands of the business experts,” says Hershauer.

“EMC Documentum has been a critical aspect of our strategy to automate business processes in a secure and compliant manner, and provide the tools that average knowledge workers need to do their jobs. EMC Documentum has always been able to support us as we’ve grown and our needs have changed.”

Ann-Marie Horcher, Senior Groupware Specialist

Leveraging existing investments for accelerated time to deployment

Leveraging its existing investments in content and technology, Dow Corning was able to launch its www.xiameter.com website into production in only three months. “Timeframe was critical,” Hershauer says. “We would not have been able to deliver the new website as quickly using any other technology. EMC Documentum enabled us to leverage our existing development and skills in www.dowcorning.com and rapidly apply them to deliver www.xiameter.com in a very short timeframe.

To help the company meet its aggressive time-to-deployment goals, Dow Corning engaged Documentum Consulting for the web content management implementation focused on the redesign of www.dowcorning.com. “At the time of our deployment, web content management was still a fairly new concept in terms of out-of-the-box delivery. Documentum Consulting was able to come in and provide the expertise we needed, and offered some of the best practices I’ve ever seen,” says Hershauer. “We could not have gotten up and running in such a short period without Documentum Consulting.”

Scaling to meet global demands

Because 60 percent of Dow Corning's sales occur outside the United States and face local language requirements for many of the markets they serve, the flagship website www.dowcorning.com needed to scale beyond English in order to become a global website. In 2003, Dow Corning reengineered its website to deliver localized content in German and Japanese. Since that time, Dow Corning has consolidated its web properties and managed them consistently, providing the foundation to continue to scale out localized content as needed and as resources allow. Hershauer remarks, "I think we were one of the first to use EMC Documentum web content management (WCM) solutions to engineer a global website. In the early days, it was difficult and required code customizations. But through our strong relationship and communication, we have actively helped each other evolve the product set. Today, new WCM customers have the ability to manage global content using Documentum. From our inception we pushed to have one core set of templates across all languages and now this is possible. This saves time in continual development, maintenance, and administrative efforts required for effective websites."

Global collaboration

Another vital component of Dow Corning's EMC Documentum solution is EMC Documentum eRoom®, a web-based collaborative workspace that enables distributed teams to work together more efficiently. "eRoom provides a virtual workspace for us to exchange data and information with our external business partners, remote teams, contractors, and anyone else that's involved in a project team," says Hershauer.

Dow Corning's eRoom implementation began with the Science and Technology group, in charge of Dow Corning research and development, which needed a better method for collaborating with product development teams affiliated with academia and other industry areas. Since then, six sigma teams, marketing teams, and other Dow Corning organizations have adopted eRoom as a collaborative technology framework. "eRoom gives these teams a central point in which to share knowledge and work through projects through their entire lifecycle," says Hershauer.

A heritage of enterprise content management

The web content management system and eRoom are more recent examples of a Dow Corning's long-standing relationship with EMC Documentum, which began in the mid-1990s. This decade-long collaboration has enabled Dow Corning to manage content for virtually every business process using the Documentum repository. The company deployed its first Documentum application in the 1990s, to help manage the huge volumes of paper generated by highly publicized litigation over silicon breast implants. This was soon followed by an application to manage regulatory-compliant engineering drawings within the company's European operation.

Currently, Dow Corning has 18 EMC Documentum content repositories corporate-wide, serving more than 150 different content management applications. “If you haven’t interacted with an EMC Documentum repository, then you probably don’t work at Dow Corning,” says Ann-Marie Horcher, senior groupware specialist at Dow Corning. “If you want access to the website, the security is managed by EMC Documentum. If you’re going to spend money at Dow Corning, EMC Documentum manages all of the approvals. And if you are going to form a contract with another party, that process is managed through an EMC Documentum repository. If a document needs to be controlled, and you need to be clear about where it is and whether it went through a certain process, then it’s being managed by EMC Documentum.”

Today, one of the most critical EMC Documentum implementations manages plant safety procedures by extracting raw data from an SAP application and assembling it into materials safety data sheets (MSDSs). Employees retrieve the MSDSs from the EMC Documentum repository via a special emergency response website, with fail over measures to ensure the site will always be available to first responders in the event of a chemical emergency. “This is a critical function for a chemical company, because it gives us an emergency response mechanism if anything happens with one of our products anywhere in the world,” said Horcher.

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Ann-Marie Horcher, Senior Groupware Specialist

As Dow Corning prepared for the implementation of the new content management-driven website, it realized that its long-term investment in the EMC Documentum technology would serve the new project well. “Over the years, we had grown together as a partnership to enable full web content management,” says Hershauer. “In the early days, Documentum was a more document-centric company and our needs were more document-centric as well. As Documentum took on more of a web content management focus, they made a point of listening to their big customers—such as Dow Corning—to evolve a product that is now very stable and one of the most viable players in the web content management space.”

By adopting EMC Documentum as the corporate standard for enterprise content management, Dow Corning has been able to ensure greater consistency in key business applications. “Because we’re using the same infrastructure for all 18 repositories, we’re able to engineer a process that will work against all repositories. Since it’s all EMC Documentum under the covers, we achieve great economies of scale,” said Horcher.

Summary

Over the past decade, Dow Corning has built a powerful information framework based on the EMC Documentum platform that has enabled the company to automate and streamline virtually every core business process. In one important example, the company was able to implement an entirely new, more powerful branded website in only three months that leverages the existing technology infrastructure. With EMC Documentum, Dow Corning has been able to improve efficiencies and ensure the consistency of content. The new website has improved the company's relationship with its customers and partners and has demonstrated Dow Corning leadership in e-business initiatives.

"EMC Documentum has played a critical aspect in our strategy to automate business processes in a secure and compliant manner, and provide the tools that average knowledge workers need to do their jobs," said Hershauer. "As a chemical company, we face stringent regulatory compliance and auditing requirements, and EMC Documentum is at the core of our ability to meet those requirements.

"EMC Documentum has always been able to support us as we've grown and our needs have changed. As we moved more into e-commerce, EMC Documentum was right there to support us with a world-class content management solution," said Hershauer. "And now, as we've gone from a more internal focus on product development to external collaboration with business partners, EMC Documentum offered the perfect solution in eRoom."

About Documentum software from EMC

Documentum software from EMC Corporation includes enterprise content management solutions that enable organizations to unite teams, content, and associated business processes. With a single platform, EMC Documentum software enables people to collaboratively create, manage, deliver, and archive the content that drives business operations, from documents and discussions to e-mail, web pages, records, and rich media. With Documentum enterprise content management, organizations improve their competitive advantage by accelerating time to market, increasing customer satisfaction, and reducing operating costs. For more information, visit software.emc.com or call **800.607.9546** (outside the U.S.: +1.925.600.6754).

About EMC

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Customer Profile
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