

Baby Boot Camp Web Site
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Need/Opportunity

When Baby Boot Camp approached Ideawire, its web site was a distant third compared to its competition. It was a victim of its own early success, resulting in an entirely static web site where files were duplicated for each new location. Ideawire's challenge was to transform the web site filled with static pages and exercise class schedules, written individually in HTML, to a dynamic web application that allowed franchisees to self-populate their schedules and students to perform targeted geographic class searches.

There was no effective way for franchisees to communicate among themselves, share ideas or provide sales guidance to one another. Additionally, Baby Boot Camp corporate lacked an effective, traceable means to disseminate messaging and manage franchisees in the U.S. and abroad. The site design and navigation structure were also exceedingly complex, since a number of vastly different audiences had to be considered and presented with context-specific information.

From a marketing standpoint, the company effectively lacked an online presence that would drive membership, recruit franchisees and serve existing students. Baby Boot Camp was faced with the prospect of failing because it couldn't communicate its message and efficiently operate its business.

Intended Audience(s)

Baby Boot Camp's primary audience consists of existing and prospective students—new and expectant mothers who want to regain their pre-pregnancy fitness levels. These mothers also seek the supportive atmosphere that the group creates and the benefit from time spent exercising with their children.

Additional Audiences:

- Current and prospective franchisee owners.
- Current and prospective instructors.
- Investors.
- Media.
- Various governmental agencies who must evaluate the web site to validate that Baby Boot Camp has met franchisee requirements in all states and countries of operation.

Franchise owners and investors are another substantial audience for this site. They wish to see Baby Boot Camp as a successful and professional company with the likely chance of sustained growth and profitability.

Baby Boot Camp's competition enjoyed a substantial lead in technology. Baby Boot Camp in turn, placed an overwhelming priority on speed for Ideawire's implementation of the web site, making the luxury of a full audience analysis impossible. As a result,

Ideawire compiled all of the known audience information into a spreadsheet and focused on drawing a few conclusions. These included:

- Women made up 98 percent of the franchise owners.
- All of the students were women.
- Ninety percent of the franchise owners were 20 – 33 years of age.

From this small subset of data, Ideawire focused on appealing to this core audience and sought feedback throughout the development process to confirm those conclusions.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Entice potential investors to purchase franchises—the lifeblood of the company. It was extremely important to build a highly functional, attractive site that would allow franchisees to attract and serve students entirely online. Franchise inquiries have increased to nearly two every day from a monthly average of seven. In turn, this necessitated the development of an applicant manager portal for the dedicated sales team to efficiently manage. Each applicant is guided through an eight step process with messaging and guidelines reflective of franchise rules based on location.

Goal 2: Increase general membership by 1,500 new memberships annually through a web site that makes finding and signing up for classes easy, and represents a program that is fun and supportive of women and family-friendly. The web site’s user interface is being constantly refined to simplify operations, and a forum was created to foster an organic community on the site. Member growth is roughly five per day, or 1,825 annually, which exceeds the initial identified goal.

Goal 3: Attract advertisers and increase the amount of media publicity. Courting these groups would assist Baby Boot Camp as it continued to grow, position Baby Boot Camp as an industry leader in women’s fitness and solidify the public’s belief in Baby Boot Camp as a credible authority. Since the site’s launch, exposure has increased 300 percent in terms of published articles and linked video from local newscasts.

Goal 4: Sell as much Baby Boot Camp merchandise as possible. Selling Baby Boot Camp merchandise online would aid in promoting the Baby Boot Camp brand worldwide and would reflect competitors’ efforts. Baby Boot Camp built on this concept by allowing franchise owners to purchase items in bulk quantities and to view different products based on the user role (consumer, franchise owner, member).

Solution Overview

After discussing Baby Boot Camp’s needs, Ideawire executed a holistic approach to the design and development of the site, developing a turnkey strategy for web site implementation. This was primarily adopted for speed of development, allowing Ideawire to tackle the web site on a section-by-section basis.

These aforementioned needs and many more were rolled into an application called “SLIMS,” the Student Licensee Instructor Management System, which facilitates business automation and enables franchisees and members to conduct business online—

accepting payment, producing class schedules, assigning instructors to classes, etc.

A key message for Baby Boot Camp was that becoming a franchisee was simple and profitable. Ideawire developed numerous web applications, which supported franchisees by disseminating internal documents easily and allowing them to manage information regarding their location, classes, instructors and even promotions instantaneously with only a web browser. Ideawire also included information on how to acquire a franchise both domestically and internationally to attract new franchise owners.

In order to increase general membership, Ideawire developed online tools to aid in implementing the business online. An administrative section provides a “dashboard” view of the business, including the number of classes offered for the period of two weeks prior and after. A sales portal was designed to strictly manage messaging, collect application fees and distribute documents to potential franchisees. Franchise owners manage their entire operating online via SLIMS, a custom-developed content management system authored by Ideawire. As a result, operational efficiencies are achieved, and the cost savings are passed directly to students, ensuring Baby Boot Camp classes are cost competitive with their competition.

Another key message was that Baby Boot Camp was a great way for new and expectant mothers to keep fit because it is so easy to sign up and participate, as so many other mothers have done. To support this key messaging, Ideawire included an overview of the program and the ability to search for classes and locations easily through a customized online schedule.

For development, Ideawire chose technology that was customizable, scaleable and accounted for expected growth. The Microsoft-based environment of ASP.NET (C#) and SQL Server 2000 provided the flexibility to accommodate both expected and unanticipated requirements over the last few years. Specifically, the framework was selected to facilitate working with Excel spreadsheets and Word documents—tools that would be familiar and available to most users.

Baby Boot Camp stakeholders have been involved in every step with the use of an online project manager and beta development environment, allowing them to approve and provide feedback on all aspects of the site development.

Implementation and Challenges

Understanding Baby Boot Camp’s need to revise and alter the site on an almost daily basis, Ideawire decided that the most time- and cost-effective method for this mode of development was to implement a retainer agreement with Baby Boot Camp. Through this contract, Baby Boot Camp allots a varying dollar amount each month for programming, design or other generic revisions and minor projects.

Some components of the site are completed in a single day, while other projects may take months due to multiple client revisions. To date, Baby Boot Camp has invested more than US\$200,000 in the Baby Boot Camp web site. It is safe to say that without this

agreement, there would have been thousands of dollars worth of administrative work and multiple delays in development.

Ideawire had to accommodate the distance between all members of Baby Boot Camp management (California) and Ideawire (San Antonio, Texas). During development, Baby Boot Camp's corporate headquarters moved across the country to Florida, yet through constant communication Ideawire has been able to continue development with Baby Boot Camp, avoiding delays in design and deployment.

Measurement/Evaluation

Baby Boot Camp serves a diverse constituency, catering to students, instructors, franchise owners, potential investors and the media. A number of statistics are telling and indicate how the web site has been an overwhelming success. Site traffic grew exponentially from 650 megabytes to 12 gigabytes+ per month since the launch. The length of an average session increased by nearly five minutes to 7 ½ minutes, meaning that visitors are enjoying a rich experience that goes beyond perusing the site.

Goal 1: Entice potential investors to purchase franchises—the lifeblood of the company.

Results: Since the launch of Baby Boot Camp's web site, the amount of active franchises has more than tripled. There are currently 129 active locations and 178 instructors teaching Baby Boot Camp curriculum with an average of 270 classes occurring each week. In addition, Ideawire has created a suite of web-based tools that allow for both profitable and effective management, and this infrastructure paired with a professional design is appealing to a wide audience.

Goal 3: Provide a web site that attracts advertisers and media.

Results: Ideawire provided ways for Baby Boot Camp to track the number of visitors that click on each advertisement so they are able to provide targeted advertising from sponsors and have full reporting capabilities. This allowed Baby Boot Camp to obtain national advertising deals, such as Kelty strollers and Pria Bars.

The Baby Boot Camp web site has also been a crucial tool in media relations. Since the web site's launch, the web site has been referenced by more than 40 media outlets including *ePregnancy Magazine* and *Parents Magazine*, among countless local news stations.

Goal 4: Sell as much Baby Boot Camp merchandise as possible.

Results: Since the launch of the Baby Boot Camp online store, there has been an average of one to two sales every day, and over US\$26,000 received through online sales of merchandise, classes and gift certificates. Despite this initial success, Ideawire continues to make daily adjustments to the store to improve its usability and visual appeal, based on user feedback.

