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Search



Business Intelligence



eCommerce

## Spotlight on Client Success

### CLIENT PROFILE

#### Name:

Omega Cinema Props

#### Description:

After over 40 years in business, and growing from 2,000 to nearly 300,000 square feet, Omega Cinema Props offers the largest selection of Props anywhere in the Entertainment Industry.

#### Industry:

Entertainment

#### Need:

Enhance customer ability to find props from a vast inventory.

#### Results:

- Modern website.
- Fast, accurate search
- Maintainable system

*"Our customers are beyond happy and excited—especially those working in other states, as they can finally shop our vast inventory from afar and have us arrange for shipping. The new search and website have been fantastic. We should have gone down this road much sooner!"*

-Allan Songer  
Assistant General Manager

### BACKGROUND

Omega Cinema Props maintains and rents a vast inventory of items, such as furniture, lighting and artwork, which are used for set dressing and props for commercials, TV shows and movies. Customers of Omega typically go to one of four warehouse locations to physically review items of interest; at times, customers would use Omega's website to search and browse inventory, prior to arriving at the physical location.

The trend had long been moving towards online browsing of inventory. However, customers indicated that Omega's site search was difficult to use and was not effective for discovery—a product may be in the inventory but not surfaced by searching, making visits to the warehouse less efficient than desired. Additionally, Omega had an older, HTML website that was difficult to maintain and did not adequately reflect their brand.

Allan Songer, Assistant General Manager at Omega explains: "About two years ago here at Omega Cinema Props we found ourselves with a website designed in 1998 that our customers found difficult to navigate. We had been getting complaints for years that while our inventory, information and images were the best in the industry, it was almost impossible to search and find them. Not having any experience with search or modern website design we began looking for experts in the field to help us out."

As such, Omega knew it needed to replace their existing website with the main goal of making inventory much easier to find.

"We narrowed the list of firms to three and after extensive conversations with all of them it became obvious to us that Innovent Solutions were the folks who fully understood our needs and their proposal was spot on both in terms of scope and pricing."

### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The goals of the project were to build and deploy a new website where: 1) Search and navigation was the focal point, 2) the site design was to be simple, clean and intuitive 3) search features such as faceting, sorting, and auto-complete should be provided and 4) the product catalogue was to be "front-and-center" for the user experience.

#### Design & Build a Modern Website

Omega's existing website was built in the late 1990's and reflected the technology of the times: html, frames and database-powered search. The site was rigid and difficult to maintain. Omega wanted a new site design that was simple, clean and intuitive, and built using a content management system so that maintenance would be simplified.

#### Implement Modern Search Engine Technology

Site search for the existing site utilized database queries. Database search has many known limitations and performance issues, and does not offer many ways to improve relevancy. Omega wanted to use modern search technology to take advantage of inherent features such as relevancy, speed and accuracy. Further, driving category navigation from data in the search index was very important.

#### Automate the Data Ingestion Process

Omega's inventory data resides in an Oracle database associated to a software product designed exclusively for ERP and inventory management. A data ingestion process would be required to automate data indexing on a daily basis.

#### Deliver Quality of Search Results

In addition to the expected gains from using modern search technology, Omega indicated that inventory data may have issues with quality which may affect search quality. Special care needed to be taken to address data quality issues so as to ensure good search results.

## SOLUTIONS

The solutions to these business challenges were implemented collaboratively, using teams from Omega and Innovent staff. Innovent designed, built, and delivered a new, Drupal-based website with Solr-driven search, along with several value-added features to enhance the end user experience.

### Design & Build a modern website

Innovent's design team led the design process with Omega to understand their needs, producing options that incorporated feedback throughout. An attractive, user-friendly site was created using the Drupal content management system as the platform, with a few customizations to enable features that are important to Omega's users. Features similar to an eCommerce site were implemented including autocomplete, sorting and pagination, grid and list views of search results, and faceted navigation. Special attention was paid to the display of inventory thumbnails and descriptions both on the search results page and detail page to display clean images, rental pricing and in-stock quantities. Other important features included:

Wish List: Omega's customers are able to set up a secure, online account and save wish lists of items anticipated to be used in movie or commercial productions. Lists may be organized by job and set name and users can download and/or email lists to assist during a physical review at the warehouse, or used by Omega's order desk for fulfillment.

Featured Products: On occasion when new inventory arrives to Omega, a mechanism was needed to display newly available items on the site's home page.

Tour Omega: Omega has a large inventory of items and it is important to give site visitors a glimpse at the vastness of the collection. A Tour page was created that dynamically displays images by warehouse and category, which only requires Omega to upload new images to folders to be displayed.

### Implement Modern Search Technology

Upon reviewing and understanding Omega's search requirements, Innovent implemented open-source Apache Solr. Innovent designed an appropriate schema, assessed anticipated search volume requirements, advised and recommended a hosting platform, and configured and deployed the production environment. Innovent provided best-practice consulting related to the application of search technology to meet Omega's business goals, and guided on how search features would be presented and used on the site.

### Automate the Data Ingestion Process

Innovent designed a process that indexes inventory on a nightly basis, including data exception reporting, and collaborated with the inventory software provider to create a nightly data extract and automate its processing. Additionally, Omega needed to be able to make changes to the inventory database that would reflect in the index; capabilities were provided to add or modify search taxonomy and other metadata used by Solr via the inventory software application. Innovent also advised on the usage of metadata attributes to improve search and navigation which also improved find-ability.

### Delivery of Quality Search Results

Utilizing Innovent's Quality of Search ("QoS") methodology, the project team worked together to systematically test search results based on expected use cases and analytics data and implemented tuning to improve search results. Innovent also advised and implemented solutions related to synonym usage. With any eye on the long term maintenance of the solution, analytics tracking was implemented so that Omega can analyze and tune search based on customer usage. With an inventory of nearly 130,000 items, attempting to address all data quality issues prior to rollout would cause unnecessary delays. The combination of solutions implemented for the data ingestion process, along with best practice advisement on how to address search quality issues, have enabled Omega to nurture the system for the long term.

## THE RESULTS

Even though Omega's vast inventory is spread among its large warehouses, customers can now reliably search and view the inventory anywhere, anytime whether it be a desktop, tablet or smartphone. With search powered by Solr, clients have quickly noticed the speed and accuracy of search results. Fast, relevant search, category browsing, along with the new Wish List and other features, have given Omega's clients a streamlined experience. Within days of launch feedback began to arrive including:

"An executive at a major movie studio was very impressed with the new Omega website, said it was an industry game changer!"

"Someone just ordered a large number of cleared art paintings to be sent to Chicago. She just got a link to the website yesterday. Order went out today."

"Over the course of the project we worked closely with the team at Innovent and in the end we were presented with a new search and new website built expressly for us and our needs. Our customers are beyond happy and excited—especially those working in other states, as they can finally shop our vast inventory from afar and have us arrange for shipping. The new search and website have been fantastic. We should have gone down this road much sooner!" - Allan Songer



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[www.innoventsolutions.com](http://www.innoventsolutions.com)

Innovent Solutions provides consulting, training and support services and solutions for Search, Business Intelligence and eCommerce technologies. We build systems that enable our clients to:

- Find the information they want and need
- Understand the context and meaning of information
- Trust the information to be accurate and timely

Our focus on customer goals and objectives combined with deep technical depth and experience, allow us to build successful, high visibility solutions that deliver immediate value to our clients.

Innovent Solutions is a privately held company headquartered in Irvine, California with offices in Minneapolis.

## HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Innovent provides consulting, training and support services to organizations who are evaluating, or have decided to use, Solr and Lucene for enterprise or commerce search applications. Our services include:

- Solr installation, configuration and integration
- Distributed search strategies, including SolrCloud
- Architecture for a highly available solution that scales for current and future volume
- Architecture for disaster recovery and replication
- High performance data ingestion pipelines
- Index optimization to ensure relevancy
- Performance tuning and load testing
- In-depth reporting and analysis of search information and usage
- Certified Solr Training