

Teehan+Lax deploys Contentful to manage content creation on lifestyle marketplace Krush

About Teehan+Lax

Founded in the wake of the dot-com bust by creative duo Geoff Teehan and Jon Lax, Teehan+Lax is an agency with a mission to help companies create great digital products. Its groundbreaking work for Readability, Medium and Bell Canada among others, won Teehan+Lax numerous awards and established it as one of the most innovative digital agencies worldwide.



About Krush

Krush is a social shopping app for action sports, street-wear and outdoor culture. The app features a growing collection of thousands of hand-picked products and dozens of upcoming independent brands, which users can discover, connect with and build their personal style around. Krush also offers brands and businesses a platform for engaging and transacting with their fans online.



Background

Krush approached Teehan+Lax with the request to help the company develop a new type of shopping platform: the goal was to create an app that would allow users to curate content, endorse products, and actively engage with lifestyle brands present on the platform before deciding where to spend their money.

Which way to the beach?

The Krush platform is home to brands who develop lifestyle products. Brand founders and creatives are very creative in communicating their passions through a whole range of mediums: from editorial stories and personal blogs to photo shoots and video diaries. Krush's main concern was to empower these creatives to tell the story of their brand without getting bogged down in technical drudgery.

Teehan+Lax was confronted with the choice between developing a proprietary Content Management System (CMS) to cater for the needs of Krush partners or to turn to a specialized service working on this very problem. "Building the core functionality would have been straightforward enough," says David Gillis, Teehan+Lax partner.

"But it's when we started thinking about edge cases - things like managing login credentials, uploading jumbo-sized media files, or validating entries according to predefined rules - when we realized how much time & energy it would require to develop even a fairly basic CMS for powering Krush apps."

David Gillis, Teehan+Lax partner

Requirements

- A way to edit in-app content in a user-friendly environment;
- Ability to extend & modify content models as you go;
- Straightforward delivery of content to a variety of devices;

Results

- Easy to use, scalable CMS for creating content;
- Modular content structure that can be edited at any time;
- Robust API compatible with all major development platforms;



The Teehan+Lax team had only 90 days to deliver a fully-functional service, so devoting a sizable chunk of this time just to replicate standard CMS functionality seemed unwise. Meanwhile, Contentful offered a flexible CMS for mobile apps right out of the box. "The fact that editing interface was so easy to use for non-techies, quickly sealed our decision to adopt Contentful for creating content on Krush," David Gillis explains.

If in doubt, paddle out

As the project got under way, the need to introduce e-commerce capabilities to the Krush platform arose. This meant that existing brand storefronts had to be extended to accommodate inventory handling and sales options among other things.

Under normal circumstances such a change of scope would require the team to scrap most of the backend work done to date and would likely cause quite a few hiccups to content creators already using the system. Yet, thanks to the modular structure of content types in Contentful, the project team could tackle the problem adding extra fields and validation rules for capturing inventory & logistics data.

"Contentful's Lego-like approach to structuring content easily saved us three weeks when it came to developing e-commerce features on Krush platform."

David Gillis, Teehan+Lax partner

Dave Bobak, technical lead at Teehan+Lax, describes the work that went into adding new features to CMS: "We didn't have to waste time refactoring code or migrating databases, all that was required of us was to extend the underlying content model. Then the next time an editor opened her browser, she saw an updated editing interface and could start editing inventory right away."

Perfect surf condition

From its early projects onwards, Teehan+Lax has established the reputation for pushing the envelope in mobile development. "The limiting factor in our work are rather technologies built with desktop computers and static web pages in mind," points out David Gillis. Moving away from these technologies offers opportunities to create a much more engaging user experience, while making mobile services less data- and power-hungry.

"In this context, Contentful's platform-agnostic content set-up and its well thought-out API infrastructure simplify the process of developing mobile services by several orders of magnitude."

David Gillis, Teehan+Lax partner

By taking care of the mundane task of structuring, maintaining and delivering content from A to Z, Contentful offered the development team at Teehan+Lax the freedom to experiment with things that truly mattered to Krush - a polished user interfaces, viral interaction model and a more robust app architecture. "We saved an estimated six weeks of development effort by leveraging Contentful for the content management," observes David Gillis, "which ultimately meant six more weeks spent on optimizing core user experience. Who would ever say 'No' to that kind of creative freedom?"



About Contentful

Contentful is content management platform for web applications, mobile apps and connected devices. It allows you to create, edit & manage content in the cloud and publish it anywhere via powerful API. Contentful offers tools for managing editorial teams and enabling cooperation between organisations.

To learn more about how Contentful can help you scale your publishing efforts, please visit our website at www.contentful.com or email us at sales@contentful.com.