



CUSTOMER STORY

Shifting Southern Phone's Business
from Direct Sales to eCommerce
Powered by Sitecore

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As telecommunications companies grow and adapt to changing consumer preferences, they must implement and experiment with new technology-enabled business models to meet the needs of their existing customers and reach a wider audience. After launching its first eCommerce site in early 2017, Southern Phone Company, a leading Australian telecom company, was seeking a more robust platform to help drive personalization and expand its reach into new geographies and demographics.

While the eCommerce site initially produced a spike in sales for Southern Phone, it also created a myriad of unforeseen challenges around user experience, SEO and customer service. In order to solve these challenges and increase sales, Southern Phone partnered with EPAM because of its eCommerce expertise. From there, EPAM selected and implemented Sitecore Commerce as an all-in-one solution to help shift the client's business from direct sales to a powerful online model that offers a world-class customer experience.

DIGITAL BRINGS UNFORESEEN CHALLENGES FOR SOUTHERN PHONE

Prior to 2017, Southern Phone's digital presence was very limited, as the business was well served by funneling customers into an onshore-based call center for sales, support and customer service. Increasing digital demand drove Southern Phone to launch its first eCommerce site in early 2017. While these efforts initially resulted in increased revenue, limitations quickly emerged, including:

- Slow response speeds of 7-10 seconds and the inability to adequately scale were contributing to a poor customer experience, especially on mobile
- The existing URL structure was not conducive to remarketing and personalization
- Digital assets were difficult to manage, often requiring developer intervention
- ZenDesk (the client's help desk) was not integrated with the website

As a result of these limitations, the company's bottom line was impacted – customers were abandoning their shopping carts, SEO results were falling due to the slow site, and a lack of digital marketing capabilities was hindering the growth of the digital funnel. Southern Phone selected EPAM as its implementation partner to address these challenges because of EPAM's focus on agility, user experience and eCommerce.

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A CLOUD-HOSTED SITECORE STACK IS THE PERFECT FIT FOR NEW & EXISTING CUSTOMERS

When EPAM started working with Southern Phone, the first question the team needed to address was which technology stack would work best for the client. EPAM conducted a comparative analysis between different platforms and recommended the following stack:

- Sitecore Commerce 8.2.1 for its robust feature set
- Sitecore Experience Platform for its

responsiveness to technical issues and native integration with Sitecore Commerce, as well as EPAM's deep Sitecore experience

- Cloud-hosted Azure platform to address the customer's scalability and page load challenges stemming from on-premise network issues

"Sitecore was selected because it was an end-to-end fit for the business goals outlined by Southern Phone. Not only was Sitecore capable of delivering an engaging and performant user experience, it could also drive a complex personalized commerce journey with marketing automation capabilities on a single integrated platform."

Dustin Collis, Senior Director, Technology Solutions, EPAM

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After the technology stack was selected, EPAM deployed a team across its global delivery centers, including Belarus, Singapore, China, Australia and the U.S. The EPAM team developed and implemented an eCommerce solution with the following features:

- Increased scalability through minification and optimization to serve higher session volumes while providing faster page load times
- Improved URL structure to enable laser-focused remarketing
- Utilization of Sitecore's engagement tactics, including Engagement Value Score, goals, reporting facets, Sitecore Email Experience Manager and engagement plans, to drive more personalized and deeper relationships with customers
- Updated look and feel, including ensuring the site was truly responsive
- Fresh branding to fully take advantage of the new digital direction

- Integration with ZenDesk technology
- Ability to create dynamic and complex product structures and relationships, including bundling, outright vs. subscription pricing, upsells and cross-sells
- Call deflection through ticket creation and knowledge base exposure

During the implementation, EPAM also worked with Southern Phone to define an Engagement and Personalization Roadmap to be deployed over the next year. This roadmap enabled Southern Phone to begin delivering relevant content as well as forming the basis of a single customer view.

The Southern Phone engagement became the first production project for the EPAM Sitecore China team and a shining example of a pure Sitecore Commerce 8.2.1 production launch in Australia.

TECHNOLOGY STACK AT A GLANCE

- Sitecore Commerce 8.2.1
- Sitecore Experience Platform
- Sitecore Email Experience Manager
- Microsoft Azure Cloud
- ZenDesk
- Google Analytics

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EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS ACROSS THE BOARD FOR SOUTHERN PHONE

The new eCommerce solution addressed Southern Phone's initial challenges and resulted in increased scalability, response speed and personalization, as well as the ability to add content and products easily and integrate with ZenDesk. The solution has resulted in greater customer engagement and satisfaction, as well as an increase in digital sales, yielding the following results:

- Improved conversion rates by 35% and still increasing
- Dramatically decreased average site load time, in some cases by up to 80%, due to the Microsoft Azure platform, image compression and other optimization techniques
- Increased Google SEO rankings through mobile-optimized pages, significant decreases in page load times, and increase in conversion and

organic search ranking

- Increased user satisfaction and customer experience
- Improved Net Promoter Scores
- Improved average value per visit with the introduction of Engagement Value Scoring

With the solution successfully rolled out to customers across regional Australia, Southern Phone is looking forward to growing its digital footprint in the years to come.

"From the project's inception to go-live, the EPAM team continued to deliver an outstanding engagement experience. Everything from project management to delivering solutions that leveraged the chosen technology stack beyond expectations made the project one of the highlights of my career."

- Jay Sanderson, Digital Experience Manager, Southern Phone

CASE STUDY

Customer Story: Shifting Southern Phone's Business from Direct Sales to eCommerce Powered by Sitecore

ABOUT SOUTHERN PHONE

Formed in 2002, Southern Phone is one of the largest and most successful providers of fixed line, mobile and internet communications services in regional Australia, delivering affordable telecommunications services to regional communities.

ABOUT EPAM'S SITECORE PRACTICE

EPAM has been a certified Sitecore Platinum Partner since 2007. Serving 50+ customers across 100+ projects, EPAM's 50+ Certified Sitecore developers include 11 total Sitecore MVPs. Our expertise in Sitecore strategy and consulting, implementation and customer experience design has been recognized with five Sitecore Site of the Year awards since 2010.

QUESTIONS?

Contact us at Sales@EPAM.com
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