

Scient's prototyping methodology enabled Boats.com to accelerate their time to market. The iterative design process produced a robust solution quickly. Scient helped Boats.com explore complex ideas and finalize the solution through prototyping.

Boats.com



Boats.com

situation

The founders of Boats.com identified a tremendous opportunity for eBusiness to transform the marine industry. Several companies had attempted to enter this space, but none had been successful. Boats.com engaged Scient to help them develop a successful, long term eBusiness strategy, and transform the industry.

solution

With so many different audiences, partners and players to integrate, the team took a holistic industry approach, balancing the focus between a business-to-business and business-to-consumer strategy. This allowed boats.com to reach a broad yet segmented audience. Central to Scient's approach to the project was the decision for boats.com to work with established industry players (including rather than excluding), which allowed for an airtight business-to-business offering delivering a truly compelling consumer promise. Scient designed an elegant, consumer-centric eBusiness built on a best-of-breed technology platform meeting multiple constituent needs.

In order to quickly realize this complex multi-party system, Scient developed system prototypes (wire-frames) of the proposed site. The initial focus of the wire-frames was to represent major page flows focusing on the user interface and information architecture. Once drafted and reviewed with the client, the wire-frames were enhanced to convey complex interactions and business flows, and soon became an iterative design tool for the entire team. The process used to develop the prototypes depended on continuous client input and eventually served as the tool to gain client approval and design consensus. The prototyping process created a design environment within which the Scient and client team iteratively explored, tested and revised complex ideas on the architecture, content and "look and feel" of the site; resulting in a rapid design time and true collaboration. Once completed, the prototype functionality and process flows were then translated into detailed specifications. The prototypes were gradually evolved over the course of the engagement from paper schematics to a functioning system.

benefits received

Boats.com complex, multi-party system has successfully brought efficiency to a fragmented market. The system connects industry organizations, manufacturers and boat users to an all-inclusive marine marketplace. Thanks to Scient's rapid prototyping process, Boats.com went from idea to functioning system within nine months.

The wire-frame prototypes created were key factors in launching the business on time and on budget, while also serving to gain client satisfaction and marketplace success. The wire-frames accelerated decision-making and client sign-offs by providing concrete, actionable representations of the various design directions for the system from the initial phases of the engagement. The wire-frames were used both to advance / focus the team's work and to represent the team's output to client's senior management.

In February 2001, Boats.com closed their Series C financing in the most difficult of times, and expects to be profitable by Q4 2001.