

Cineplex Entertainment strengthens search capabilities with the 2007 Office system

Overview

Country: Canada

Industry: Retail

Customer Profile

Based in Toronto, Cineplex Entertainment LP owns, leases or has a joint-venture interest in 132 movie theatres across Canada.

Business Situation

With widely dispersed operations, Cineplex Entertainment wanted to consolidate information silos and better position itself to handle rapid growth.

Solution

Cineplex Entertainment upgraded to the 2007 Office system, including Office SharePoint 2007.

Benefits

- Searching made easy
- Streamlined workflow
- Enhanced productivity

SharePoint 2007 is helping us get that information when we need it, in the way we need it, greatly strengthening our decision-making process.

Jeff Kent, chief technology officer, Cineplex Entertainment

Based in Toronto, Cineplex Entertainment LP owns, leases or has a joint-venture interest in 132 movie theatres across Canada. Together they attract an estimated 61 million customers each year. With widely dispersed operations, staff rely on efficient and cost-effective communication of critical business information to ensure the company meets its objectives. To help consolidate information silos and better position itself to handle rapid growth, Cineplex Entertainment turned to LegendCorp., a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner, which recommended upgrading the company's infrastructure, based on Microsoft SharePoint® Server 2003, to the 2007 Office system, including SharePoint 2007. With the new communication platform in place, Cineplex Entertainment employees are equipped to make better, faster decisions, and more easily find the information they need.

Situation

Whether it's catching the latest summer blockbuster, enjoying a family outing or just passing away a rainy day, Canadians are avid movie-goers. Sold-out theatres are the norm in most cities across the country. Many of these facilities fall under the banner of Cineplex Entertainment LP. As the largest motion picture exhibitor in Canada, Cineplex Entertainment owns, operates or has a joint venture in 132 theatres with nearly 1,337 screens. Operating under the brands of Cineplex Odeon, Galaxy, Famous Players and Scotiabank Theatres, they attract over 60 million customers each year.

Cineplex Entertainment has experienced rapid growth in recent years, adding to its already sizable operations through a series of strategic acquisitions. With new movies arriving daily, and a public that has numerous ways to spend their entertainment dollars, Cineplex Entertainment must make fast, timely decisions to ensure customers continue to enjoy a unique experience.

One critical success factor is communication. Cineplex Entertainment relies on a smooth flow of business information to alert it to movie-going trends, track attendance figures, and make critical business decisions. But the company's acquisition strategy, which has solidified its competitiveness, also created a technology infrastructure that was not providing the company with the flexibility and responsiveness it required.

"We were running multiple back-end systems, each with a different user interface," says Jeff Kent, chief technology officer, Cineplex Entertainment. "This made it more complicated for staff to use, and didn't position us to take full advantage of our growth potential."

Employees lacked a central repository of information, which made it difficult for them

to find and search for information. Cineplex Entertainment turned to Google desktop search application to help solve this challenge. But the data workers require are stored in a variety of formats, including documents based on Microsoft® Excel spreadsheet software, Microsoft Word documents and slide presentations based on PowerPoint® presentation graphics programs. Often employees would need to engage in multiple searches – using different search criteria – to find the information they needed, diverting their efforts from the task at hand.

Productivity was not the only consideration. As a publicly traded company, Cineplex Entertainment must adhere to regulations that dictate the handling and storage of sensitive documents. The company had no easy way to manage this process.

"Not only did we need to bring information together and make it accessible through search, we also needed to establish an effective way to control versions and access," says Kent. "We decided to seek ways to extend the features of SharePoint."

Solution

Cineplex Entertainment turned to LegendCorp, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, to help it review its communication workflow and recommend a way to enhance the performance of its SharePoint-based system. After considering the company's business challenges, LegendCorp advised Cineplex Entertainment to upgrade to the 2007 Office system, including Office SharePoint Server 2007.

"SharePoint offered us the functionality we required, but with Office 2007, we could see that the software was moving in the right direction and had a clear roadmap we could follow to help us achieve our business goals," says Kent.

Office SharePoint Server 2007 offers businesses an integrated suite of server capabilities for enterprise search, content management, business process facilitation, simplified information sharing, and enhanced business insight. It's designed to help people find and use information in a near-seamless fashion.

The implementation process was smooth, as staff were already accustomed to the look and feel of Microsoft Office software. As well, the company's infrastructure already included Active Directory® directory service and Windows Server® 2003, which helped make the process of back-office integration easier.

"We've enjoyed a long partnership with Cineplex Entertainment, and were very familiar with their business requirements. The 2007 Office system fit easily into its operating environment, and positions them to handle a rapidly growing customer and employee base," says Andy Papadopoulos, president, LegendCorp.

Benefits

Upgrading to the 2007 Office system has helped Cineplex Entertainment provide its staff with an easily searchable and accessible information framework that enables them to make better, more informed decisions.

Searching made easy

With SharePoint 2007, Cineplex Entertainment has put in place a cross-platform enterprise search solution that can help employees get the information they need to carry out important tasks, regardless of their location. Users can search for documents that contain a specific word or phrase, that are written in a specific language, or that are created in a specific application.

Office SharePoint Server 2007 also includes features that help narrow searches – allowing users to search for only those documents that contain an exact phrase, for example. These functions help Cineplex Entertainment staff quickly locate a wide range of data, from updated theatre revenue figures to movie attendance statistics.

"Some of our people need updated information on a daily, an even hourly, basis. Weekends are the busiest times at our theatres, and management needs to view numbers before making key business decisions on Monday. SharePoint 2007 is helping us get that information when we need, in the way we need it, greatly strengthening our decision-making process," says Kent.

Streamlined workflow

The security features of SharePoint 2007 are also helping Cineplex Entertainment more easily comply with industry regulations.

SharePoint 2007 includes integrated records management capabilities that give organizations the capability to store and protect business records in their final state. Expiration policies applied to these records help ensure that the records are retained for the appropriate time period to comply with regulations or corporate business policies, mitigating legal risk to the organization. Audit trails provide proof to internal and external auditors that records have been retained appropriately. Features such as these are important to publicly traded companies like Cineplex Entertainment.

"There are regulatory requirements we have to follow, which dictate who can look at what files, and how long we must retain documents for review. SharePoint 2007 offers us features that help make this process easier, giving us more time to focus on our core business," says Kent.

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For more information about Cineplex Entertainment LP products and services, call 800-333-0061 or visit the Web site at: www.cineplex.com

Enhanced productivity

The revamped user interface found in SharePoint 2007 also helps users, most of whom are already familiar with the look and feel of Microsoft-based software, easily navigate between folders and files and locate what they need faster than ever before. The near-seamless integration with other 2007 Office system software ensures that moving between applications and document types is a simple process.

“SharePoint 2007 provides an even more consistent user experience for employees, which makes their jobs easier, and enabling them to be as productive as possible. Enabling staff to get more done in less time strengthens the business,” adds Kent.

Microsoft Office System

The Microsoft Office system is the business world’s chosen environment for information work, providing the programs, servers, and services that help you succeed by transforming information into impact.

For more information about the Microsoft Office system, go to: www.microsoft.com/office

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Document published May, 2008

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