



Case Study

A web based testimonial and referral service

Our clients has a website that provides members with the opportunity to automate the process of requesting for testimonials and referrals from their customers and in turn, showcase these testimonials on other websites thereby proving them with a great means of building and establishing credibility. However, several bugs and errors existed which plagued the smooth functioning of the website. Icreon was roped in to resolve the issues and build enhancements to it.

Customer Profile

Our client is a US based entrepreneur.

Business Requirements

Our client was offering a subscription based testimonial and referral service wherein members are provided with the means to request their customers to submit testimonials and also refer them to others. Our client felt that the performance of the website was not up to the mark, as there were several bugs that needed resolution. Some of the issues that needed attention included:

- Process of request and submitting testimonials
- Twitter integration
- Problems when upgrading from an individual account to a company account

In addition, there were several others errors that need to be resolved.

Resolving problems and delivering a bug free website

After a detailed study of the website and the underlying code, the Icreon team worked on resolving the issues and delivering a bug-free website. Several new features were added to the website.

Challenges:

The major challenge that we faced was integrating the website with the search API of LinkedIn. Searched profiles from LinkedIn were to be shown on the website. During the whole process the control was required to remain on the website. While devolving the solution we have successfully overpowered restrictions imposed by LinkedIn, pertaining to some predefined hits.

Solution:

The website provides users with a platform to sign-up to receive testimonials (or props) from their customers. These props are showcased on the website itself. Additionally, members have access to a

widget (customizable by the member in terms of the props that are to be included) that contains all props received by a member and can be easily added to other websites. The widget also contains a link prompting people to submit testimonials. Members can choose from a wide variety of graphical and text links and add them to e-mail signatures, social networking websites etc. The links will direct users to submit a testimonial for the member.

Registration to the website is subscription based; two types of subscribers are available – individual and company accounts. The difference between the two being that company account holders can create individual accounts for their employees. Members can login to the website to view and track all props and referrals that they have received and also given to others. Options to flag selected props as favorite as well as delete inconsequential ones have been provided. Members can also manage their profile settings – change password, update profile details, select e-mail subscription options as well as the company details.

An option to give a testimonial to a person/company who is not listed on the website has also been provided. In this case an e-mail will be sent to the specified address notifying them about the testimonial received.

We overhauled the subscription and login process. Previously, after completing a subscription process, members were required to re-login to access their account area. Now, members are automatically logged in and directed to their account area upon subscription. Additionally, we have worked upon and rectified the problems in upgrading from an individual subscription to a company one.

The process of submitting testimonials (from widgets included in third-party websites) has been modified to allow customers of paid members to submit props directly from the widget itself without being re-directed to the website.

All problems related to Twitter integration have been resolved. Members can integrate their accounts with that of their Twitter accounts. Preferences can be set allowing members to customize the types of testimonials that are to appear as status updates on Twitter.

We have integrated Google Analytics with the solution allowing our client to, in addition to tracking the number of hits received, track the number of people who viewed the various subscription pages and the number who eventually subscribed. Google Analytics also tracks the hits received from third-party websites wherein the website link has been used. Keywords and phrases used to search within the website are also sent to Google Analytics allowing the client to track popular search terms.

Another new feature added is the integration of the website with that of LinkedIn. Members will be prompted to showcase their received props and referrals on their corresponding LinkedIn accounts.

With the successful resolution of the issues, we have provided our client with a revamped website thereby enabling them to provide error-free and improved services to their customers.

Technical Details:

Technology Used



The solution follows MVC architecture, making it easy to maintain. Prototype framework has been used for JavaScript. SVN has been used for version control. We have made use of Capistrano deployment tool to ease the process of deploying websites on remote servers

Components Used

Various Ruby on Rails components have been integrated with the solution. These include:

Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn APIs:	Has been used to authenticate members' Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn login credentials. We are also using the LinkedIn API to retrieve details of users who have corresponding accounts on LinkedIn.
AuthLogic:	This component has been used to handle user authentications.
Access Control:	Has been used to provide role based access within the website.
SSL Requirement:	This component has been used to encrypt the data being sent and received from the server
Act as Tree:	Has been used to maintain data in a parent-child relationship.
Sphinx:	This component has been used to provide a full text search.
Simple CAPTCHA	Has been used to implement CAPTCHA technology to prevent spamming from automated scripts.