



# CUSTOM USER EXPERIENCE FOR A CUSTOM HOME BUILDER

## Case Study: Drees Homes Web Design

### Overview

Drees Homes has been building custom homes for more than 85 years and is now the 7th largest privately-owned homebuilder in the nation. While the integrity and standards of the family-owned business have remained through generations, the technology continues to evolve. Drees Homes relied heavily on its website to drive customer leads and showcase its move-up homes, but they recognized the need to update their website to meet prospective customers' needs and expectations and to stay competitive in the digital landscape.

### Market Reality

With the Great Recession and housing crisis in rear view, home-buyers today are once again focused on not just buying a house, but custom building their own home. Most often, today's buyer begins the search for their new home online. In order to stay competitive in today's market,

homebuilders must be visible to potential buyers and have meaningful information readily available. Many homebuilders purposefully held off investing resources into their website during the downturn in the housing market. However, with today's focus on technology and the desire for readily available information, homebuilders can benefit significantly from updating their online presence.

### Business Opportunity

Drees Homes recognized that important role their website played in gaining potential customer. However, the site's outdated visual design, lack of mobile responsiveness, and limited search engine visibility were working against them in the crowded home building marketplace. Additionally, maintaining the site was highly inefficient as the marketing department was dependent upon limited IT staff to make content updates. They were not utilizing best practices for capturing site data. The

### Objectives

- Update website visual design
- Improve user experience
- Drive more sales leads
- Deliver a mobile responsive design

### Approach

- Create rich content focused on search engine optimization
- Use testimonials and customer benefits to help potential buyers understand the service Drees provides
- Elevate website architecture and design
- Focus on the website visitor and user friendly tools

### Business Impact

- Ability to reach a growing mobile audience with more complete information
- Ability to access actionable analytics data
- On-trend design that more effectively conveys the client's brand image
- Enhanced search engine visibility
- Increased accuracy in representation of available properties and pricing

### Keys to Success

- Access to a wide range of client stakeholders and customers to gather data
- In-depth, regular collaboration and checkpoints with client IT and Marketing teams throughout the process
- Client responsiveness

site was not search engine optimized and they needed to better understand their customers' needs. Drees Homes turned to Fusion Alliance for strategic, technical, and creative expertise to help increase the effectiveness of their website.

### Drees Homes' Solution

In order to be able to recommend features, tools, and functionality for their new site, Fusion and Drees conducted customer and stakeholder interviews and online surveys. The information gained from this research provided the roadmap for the site redesign, including:

- ▶ Streamlined site structure better suited to drive users through the custom home buying process
- ▶ User-centered approach to the home search utility emphasizing the pathways most likely taken by the majority of visitors
- ▶ More opportunities for visitors to make contact with Drees sales representatives
- ▶ New, rich content to increase search engine visibility, as well as deeper level listing pages that can be found by users searching for new homes in a specific geographic region
- ▶ New look and feel incorporating the latest design trends
- ▶ Mobile responsive design
- ▶ Consistency in messaging – continuously communicating the brand identity, voice, and value on every page
- ▶ New feature that allows customers to compare different homes
- ▶ SEO-friendly town pages (only accessed through search to help in search rankings)

Fusion also implemented a measurement framework so that Drees Homes would have the ability to measure site performance through Google Analytics to enable ongoing optimization and improvement.

With its new content, features, and functionality based on user research, as well as modern, on-trend design, the site can more effectively convey the quality and service the client provides.

### What Other Companies Can Learn

The quality of a company's website is invaluable to potential customers. Today more than ever, people turn to the Internet first for information. Through effective search engine optimization, companies can make their websites more visible and more likely to be visited by potential customers. In addition, people frequently use their smartphones to access information quickly and away from home. By creating a mobile optimized website, companies create an environment where users are likely to spend more time on the website and have a more favorable experience.

Spending the time and resources to redesign a website can have a significant, positive impact on a company regardless of industry.



### About Company

*The Drees Company, which also operates under the name DREES HOMES COMPANY, is located in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. This organization primarily operates in the Speculative Builder, Single-family Houses business / industry within the Construction - General Contractors & Operative Builders sector. This organization has been operating for approximately 57 years. The Drees Company is estimated to generate \$669.3 million in annual revenues, and employs approximately 200 people at this headquarters location.*

### About Fusion Alliance

*Fusion Alliance delivers actionable insights, customer experiences and human-driven technology that transform the way our clients envision and shape their businesses.*

*That's why businesses across multiple industries have relied on Fusion's expertise and partnership for over 25 years. Fusion Alliance is the catalyst that moves your ideas to execution.*

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