INTERNATIONAL ONLINE RETAILER BUILDS CUSTOMER LOYALTY WITH COGNIZANT AND MICROSOFT AZURE CLOUD

International fashion online retailer enhances customer loyalty program and increases sales and revenues with flexible cloud solution developed by Cognizant on Azure platform with microservices-based architecture

The Challenge

An online-only fashion retailer based in the UK wanted to enhance its customer loyalty program with a new web microsite to grow sales and build loyalty. Its existing customer rewards program was based on a legacy database that did not scale easily or support internationalization. The client wanted to grow sales with frequent promotions tailored to specific loyalty program levels. So the new microsite had to be easy to edit and upgrade without incurring downtime on it or on the retailer's primary website.

The client wanted the solution to give customers easy access to their reward point balances. In addition, it was important to maintain the security of promotional voucher codes delivered via cloud. A near-term goal was to calculate reward points in real time for award vouchers.

AT A GLANCE

An online only UK retailer enhanced its existing customer loyalty program and grew its sales with a Cognizant-built solution that uses the flexibility of microservices and the power of the Azure cloud platform. The solution enables the retailer to quickly and easily change promotions and offerings on a new microsite for the loyalty program as well as roll out new features and functionality without downtime.

The Solution

A multidisciplinary Cognizant team designed, built and deployed a microservices-based microsite on Microsoft Azure for the customer loyalty program. The client's customers access this site from the primary client website to view their loyalty points and convert them into vouchers they may use on the primary e-commerce site. The microservices architecture enables fast deployment of promotional features, such as "double point days," without interrupting service on either the microsite or primary website. In the near future, the site will calculate shopping points in real-time.

Customers visit the site about 70% more often since the client introduced the enhanced loyalty program and new microsite, with loyalty program members redeeming their program vouchers having higher purchase totals. Overall customer engagement metrics have improved. The site itself has near zero downtime.

The Approach

The Cognizant engagement team consisted of cloud, analytics, testing and design experts to ensure the technology solution achieved the client's business goal of deepening customer engagement and increasing sales. The team leveraged its design, Azure and microservices-based architecture expertise to design and build an easily updated microsite for the loyalty program. Upgrades and updates to the microsite are deployed and are available from the client's primary website via a fully automated process that eliminates the need for downtime.

Registered shoppers use an online dashboard to view their loyalty point balances, voucher values, dates and deadlines, account activity, etc. The program offers four tiers of membership, and customized promotions at each level incent additional customer activity, from more frequent visits to increased purchases. The microservices-based architecture enables the client to deploy frequent new promotions and incentives, including bonus point days, easily and quickly without affecting the performance of either the microsite or the primary site.

Project Highlights

- Microservices-based microsite for easy updates

- Near zero downtime on site

- Shopper visit frequency increased by more than 70%

- Re-engagement of lapsed customers

- Higher shopping basket totals with rewards vouchers

- Secure, scalable solution

The Cognizant team leveraged a variety of Azure platform services, including Web Apps, Worker Role, SQL Azure, Service Bus and Azure Storage. Using Scrum development methodology, automating unit testing using NUnit and NMock to cover 80% plus of the code and deploying Adobe Target for rollout and A/B testing ensured the solution delivered performance and features aligned with the client's vision.

Cognizant's extensive experience in web design patterns, such as circuit breaker, competing consumer and leader election pattern design, helped the team anticipate and address cloud design issues while reducing overall development time.

The result is that the client has increased business with customers compared to the pre-loyalty program time frame. Customers with loyalty program vouchers tend to have higher basket values. The "hit and run" rate has dropped, with greater activity coming from reinvigorated customers and also new and engaged customers, with customers in both groups placing two or more orders since the program launch. Customers have increased the frequency of their visits by almost 72%.

Planned enhancements for the microsite include availability of loyalty point totals in real-time on the customer dashboard as sales are transacted. The site can easily support international membership in the loyalty program as the client expands the program.

ABOUT COGNIZANT

Cognizant (NASDAQ-100: CTSH) is one of the world's leading professional services companies, transforming clients' business, operating and technology models for the digital era. Our unique industry-based, consultative approach helps clients envision, build and run more innovative and efficient businesses. Headquartered in the U.S., Cognizant is ranked 205 on the Fortune 500 and is consistently listed among the most admired companies in the world. Learn how Cognizant helps clients lead with digital at www.cognizant.com or follow us @Cognizant.

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