

How an educational materials company improved customer experience and boosted sales

A Case Study
of Rainbow Resource Center





Since 1989, Rainbow Resource Center has been an important source of educational materials for parents and guardians who homeschool their children. With a mission “to help you teach your way,” Rainbow Resource offers its customers more than 50,000 educational products—from curricula and text books to classroom furniture, arts and crafts supplies, and games and puzzles.

Three decades ago, when the company first got off the ground, it primarily sold its products through its catalogs. But over the years, as the world wide web proved to be a viable—if not ideal—means for retail sales, Rainbow Resource adapted. It launched an ecommerce site to better, more conveniently serve its thousands of customers.

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Director of Ecommerce
Rainbow Resource Center

Rainbow Resource built its site in-house from the ground up. And while the site served the company well for a while, over the years, the source code became unstructured and difficult to maintain. “It was essentially a spaghetti code PHP site,” says Steven Listwan, director of ecommerce at Rainbow Resource. “All of our requirements were just tacked on. Nothing had modules. Nothing was easily changeable.”

As ecommerce technology advanced and customer expectations evolved, it became increasingly difficult for Rainbow Resource to provide the shopping experience its customers had grown to expect. “The site needed a very customized part and solution with regard to product availability, inventory, rules and display, and the checkout process,” Listwan explains. “It quickly became evident that we needed to replatform.”

Highlights

Situation: Educational materials company that offered more than 50,000 products online had a homegrown PHP site and struggled to provide the shopping experience its customers demanded in today's evolving ecommerce landscape.

Solution: Rainbow Resource Center needed to quickly replatform to meet the needs of its valuable customers. It engaged WebJaguar to handle the project because WebJaguar was the only platform-provider that could truly handle the complexities of replatforming the site.

Results: Since moving to the WebJaguar platform, Rainbow Resource Center has seen its online orders increase by 30%, it has eliminated upwards of 25% of its order processing costs, and it has gone from four developers required to maintain the site to one.

After going through a thorough RFP process with several platform providers, Rainbow Resource discovered that only WebJaguar was fully engaged at both a technical and sales level. “At that point, it was a very easy decision,” Listwan says. “WebJaguar was the platform provider that could truly handle the complexities of our site.”

Situation

In 2015, [Rainbow Resource Center](#) decided it was time for a new ecommerce site. The company had served its customers well for many years on its existing site, but advancements in ecommerce technology and changing customer demands and behavior meant Rainbow Resource was challenged to meet the needs of its customers and hit important business goals.

Its ecommerce site at the time was cumbersome. Patched together with various forms of unstructured and difficult-to-maintain code, it required four developers to maintain, which was both time-consuming and costly.

Rainbow Resource had a tall order for its new site: It wanted infrastructure stability, improved SEO, optimized product and category search, extended capabilities of its wishlist features, integration with customer engagement platform, and third-party tools.

Additionally, Rainbow Resource’s old platform was not using responsive pages, so the site was not usable on mobile or

tablet devices. And its server infrastructure was not capable of handling large traffic volumes, which resulted in the site going down often. These critical errors were preventing Rainbow Resource from growing as a business.

Solution

Rainbow Resource engaged in an extensive RFP process with several platform providers, including WebJaguar, to find the right solutions partner. During the initial project scoping, WebJaguar created mockups, designed templates and assigned a project manager to handle the communication with Rainbow Resource. When Rainbow Resource reviewed those scoping documents, mockups and templates, it quickly decided that WebJaguar was the ideal partner.

“We chose WebJaguar not only because their platform is easily adaptability and highly flexible, but also because of their willingness to truly listen and understand our needs,” Listwan says. “And thanks to their ability to talk technical at any point, we never had to waste time working through project managers who aren’t technical. The WebJaguar team itself is very technically adept.”

WebJaguar was able to immediately provide solutions for the critical issues Rainbow Resource was having with its old platform. It helped Rainbow Resource with responsive and device-friendly web page designs, provided robust application

infrastructure to handle a large volume of traffic and designed solutions to accept third-party tools with any feature they want.

WebJaguar successfully implemented on-site search tool Hawksearch to optimize Rainbow Resource's product search, customer-engagement platform Emarsys to provide critical business intelligence and marketing insight, and user-generated content tool TurnTo to provide product reviews.

WebJaguar also implemented a wishlist feature for Rainbow Resource to help grow their business. And it provided a solution to manage Rainbow Resource's external ERP system from within the application.

"Secure step-by-step checkout, PayPal Express Checkout, Hawksearch, TurnTo, Emarsys and admin imports are some of the features out of many that we developed specifically for Rainbow Resource Center," says Bachir Kassir, founder of WebJaguar.

Rainbow Resource has been on WebJaguar's platform since 2019. And while Listwan says they continue to develop and fine tune the site, it has been a remarkably stable platform. "We used to have a lot of crashes, old data for orders wouldn't come through correctly, and often customers weren't able to check out," Listwan says. "All of that has been resolved with the WebJaguar platform."

Results

WebJaguar has allowed Rainbow Resource to focus on its core operations—integrating them into the platform to improve productivity, business growth and internal processes.

“WebJaguar’s out-of-box solutions helped Rainbow Resource overcome issues and leverage features that it was missing in its old platform,” Kassir says. “Because our platform is highly scalable and packed with essential features, it can help almost any company grow an ecommerce business.”

Since moving to the WebJaguar platform, Rainbow Resource has seen a plethora of improvements on its ecommerce site.

- It’s able to better communicate with customers about products availability and order status.
- It can now integrate more complex product types and bundles and offer more information to customers about those new product lines.
- Its orders are up more than 30% since moving to WebJaguar’s platform.
- The company has eliminated upwards of 25% of its order processing costs.

- Instead of employing four developers to build and manage the site, it now only needs one—saving the company time and money.

“We had wound-up and hand-coded a cart and information system that just no longer worked for our business,” Listwan says. “WebJaguar came in and helped us unwind all of that to create a successful ecommerce site that has structure and is standardized. It was no small feat, but their expertise and dedication to the project made it a huge success.”

About WebJaguar

WebJaguar is a leading ecommerce platform for small- and medium-sized businesses. We provide a complete range of website set-up, custom programming, support and online marketing services. WebJaguar is a software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform containing more than 100 features to maximize sales and reduce costs for B2B companies and retailers.

(www.webjaguar.com)