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scalable business solutions
with your success as our main objective



Ceonex Case Study

HostRocket

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Ceonex, Inc., 189 Beaver St., Suite #204, North Adams, MA 01247

Project Overview

The ongoing HostRocket project has been nothing short of astounding in terms of the results seen over several phases: revenues have more than quadrupled, customer conversion rates have more than doubled, and site traffic continues to increase by over 8% each month.

"What has been achieved over several years of collaboration has not only been enormously satisfying on a professional level, but also extraordinary on a personal level as well," said Theodore Agranat, CEO of Ceonex. "It has been a genuine pleasure to see HostRocket grow into the company it is today, and I enjoyed the part that Ceonex played in that very much."

Ceonex has worked with HostRocket on three distinct phases so far, each of which pushed the web hosting company to an entirely new level and resulted in significant company growth.

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Challenge

Phase 1: Growing Pains

Web hosting had reached a strange new stage as an industry in 2001 – simultaneously growing exponentially as significant numbers of businesses and individuals signed up for hosting services, and at the same time struggling as competition became intense and price wars began to affect the medium and large web hosts as well as the small ones.

HostRocket was caught in both internal and industry growing pains, enjoying its status as a medium-sized company with its own data center, yet struggling with its image as a small, untested web host. In addition to the challenge of presenting the right image, there was the difficulty of communicating this image to the small attention span of the target audience. HostRocket had to make an impact quickly, and keep prospects engaged during the process of converting them to customers, and retaining them over time.

Finally, HostRocket found that their staff was spending time assisting prospects and customers with site navigation, as well as with answering a variety of basic questions on a repetitive basis. Their site was not effectively communicating certain information or providing a user-friendly interface, and this negatively affected HostRocket's bottom line with internal costs as well as stagnant conversion rates.

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Phase 2: Ready for Expansion

After launching Ceonex's solution in 2001, HostRocket was ready to leverage its initial – and already significant – results into further expansion. HostRocket's challenge in 2002 was to increase traffic and tap into various markets and opportunities.

The major challenge this posed was reaching certain audiences that were not optimally connected to HostRocket's ultra high-tech image. Since this image was most suitable to HostRocket's core market, we did not want to water down their brand – but instead find a fresh and unique solution to expanding their customer base.

Phase 3: Coming into Their Own

By 2003, HostRocket had matured into a highly respected web hosting company, and was ready to develop on a marketing level to connect with its audience and gain additional ground in this competitive IT industry.

Due to changing services and marketing campaigns, HostRocket wanted an updated look including a modular interface to present ever-changing offers and strategies. Additionally, HostRocket wanted to take advantage of updated technology, including new browser standards and higher monitor resolutions.

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Solution

Scalable and Modular Solution over Multiple Phases

One of the major reasons behind the success of HostRocket has been the scalable and modular approach to building their solution. This allowed the project to achieve larger successes over time after HostRocket benefited from the initial results.

In the first phase, we concentrated on building a strong and memorable brand, and improving site usability to help people navigate and find the information they were looking for. After this phase helped HostRocket grow their company significantly, they were ready to invest more into a solution that would help them expand their market.

The second phase also brought growth to the company and allowed them to take the next step in updating their brand and planning for new marketing pushes, which was the third phase of the project – and likely not the last.

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Phase 1: Rebranding and Visibility

When we started working with Hostrocket in 2001, we began with their weakest points: branding, image and navigation.

- **Strong brand** — HostRocket's original brand did not leverage the strengths of the company nor help HostRocket to stand out from vast amounts of competition. Ceonex helped HostRocket define and present a strong brand that positioned them as the host "of the future" – framing them as cutting-edge and high-tech.
- **Professional image** — Ceonex created a memorable site experience for HostRocket that increased their visibility significantly through word-of-mouth. HostRocket's new site was considered to be a pioneer of the time, a highly appropriate position for a provider of web services to a technology-oriented audience.
- **Improved navigation** — Among the significant improvements seen soon after the launch of the new site was a decrease in the time staff was spending helping prospects and clients navigate the site and find commonly needed information. As a result of the improved navigation, client satisfaction increased, and the utilization of HostRocket staff was made much more effective—ultimately helping to increase profit margins.

The sum effect of the Phase 1 project exceeded HostRocket's wildest imaginations. Ceonex made its sole focus converting as many as possible of their existing prospects, driven to their old site through advertising campaigns, into loyal and ongoing clients. The site helped the company immensely in their growth as well as in receiving international acclaim as one of the best hosting websites worldwide.

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Phase 2: Expanding Markets and Increasing

After Phase 1, HostRocket was ready to accommodate additional growth through increased traffic and signups. To achieve this, Ceonex suggested targeting niche markets and services by building smaller sites directed toward specific audiences.

Why build subsites? By building subsites, HostRocket would not need to water down their high-tech brand and service offerings. While it is tempting to be "everything for everyone" a strong and focused brand is much more effective for attracting attention, gaining trust and converting customers. Sub-brands, however, can help a company reach out to a variety of audiences without sacrificing their main brand. While HostRocket's image may not optimally connect emotionally to, for example, artists, a subsite could provide the branding, imagery and copy to attract members of the artist community.

Some of the targeted markets and audiences that Ceonex built for HostRocket included:

- Dedicated servers for businesses
- Host rating and portal site
- Hosting for start-up businesses
- Hosting for artists
- Hosting for gamers
- Hosting for pre-teen and teen girls
- Hosting for pre-teen and teen boys

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Phase 3: Advances in Technology and Marketing

By 2003, advances within HostRocket's company structure and in the web in general justified an update to HostRocket's branding and site structure. The new site refined their high-tech brand to keep them on the cutting edge, and provided significant technological upgrades, including:

- **"Stretchable" design** — In 2001, the majority of web-surfers were using 800x600 resolution monitors. By 2003, a significant portion were still on 800x600, yet the number of users who had larger resolutions had grown significantly. To accommodate the inevitable shift in resolution, Ceonex created a "stretchable" design that was not merely optimized for the lowest common denominator – but for all resolutions.
- **Modular interface** — As HostRocket matured on a marketing level, they found they had a new need for a highly modular site that would allow them to easily create new promotions and services. One major marketing push they were ready to use was "rollover bandwidth," which allowed clients to add unused resources from one month to the next month's allocation. The new site enhanced their ability to showcase this offering, which was highly popular and pushed HostRocket to a new plateau in signups.
- **Improved coding standards** — After a few years, the usage of many older browsers had decreased to a point where updated coding standards could be used. In addition to increasing the dynamic and interactive possibilities on the site and decreasing download times, the new standards improved HostRocket's search engine visibility.

Ultimately the third phase allowed Ceonex to help HostRocket to an entirely new level appropriate to the impressive growth of the company.

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Results

Results for each stage of the HostRocket project have been nothing short of astounding. The creation of a strong brand for this company, as well as the installment of a variety of solutions to build visibility, increase usability and more, has significantly strengthened revenues, conversion and traffic.

Our results over 2.5 years included:

- More than quadrupled revenue
- More than doubled conversion rates
- 8.3% average increase in traffic per month
- 15-20% decrease in turnover after both phase 1 and 3

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Revenue More Than Quadrupled

Each phase contributed significantly to HostRocket's bottom line: revenues had more than doubled by 2002. By 2003 the total increase in revenues was 320% - or more than quadruple their 2001 revenues.

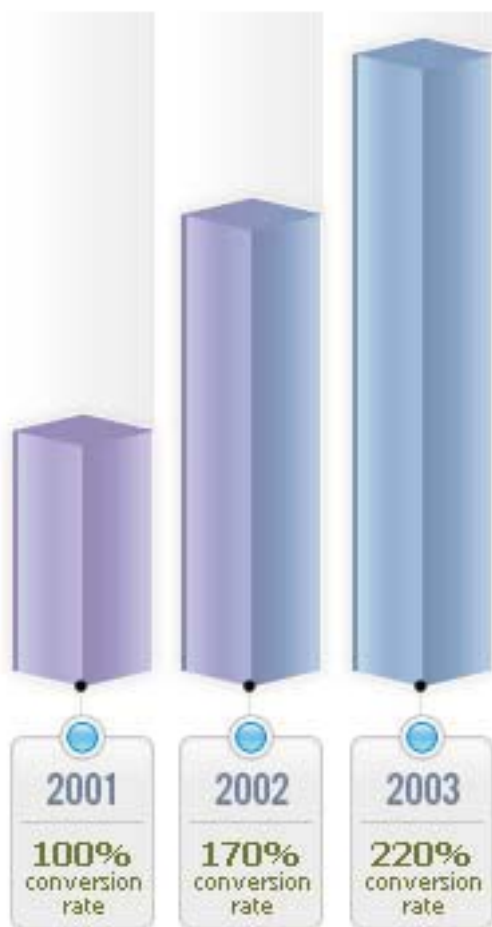


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Conversion Rates More Than Doubled

After launching the first phase of the HostRocket project, they noticed conversion rates had gone up by 70%. After the third phase, conversion rates increased an additional 50%, bringing the total conversion rate increase to 120% - more than double what they started with.

TOTAL CONVERSION RATE INCREASE

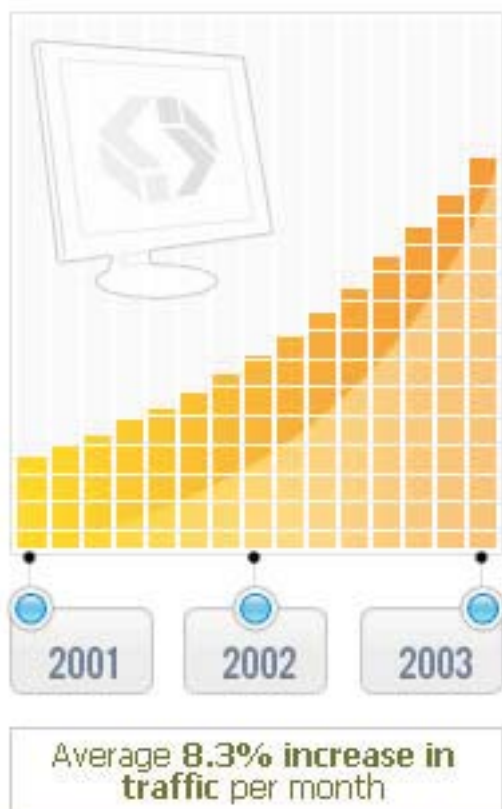


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Average Monthly Traffic Increase 8.3%

Due to increased visibility, word-of-mouth, divisions targeting niche markets and increased SEO, HostRocket saw an average 8.3% monthly increase in site traffic.

OVERALL MONTHLY INCREASE IN NEW TRAFFIC

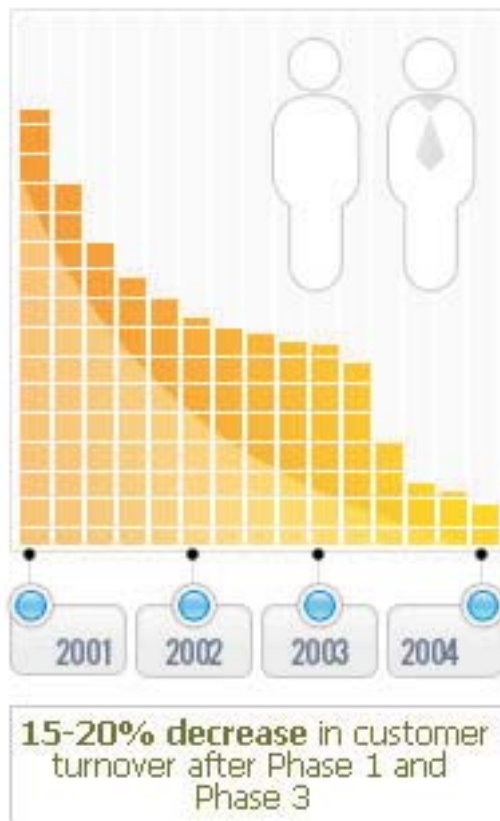


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Turnover Rates Decreased 15-20%

Turnover, or "churn," decreased 15-20% soon after both Phase 1 and Phase 3 launches, mostly due to a strong brand and easier support through a more useable site.

TURNOVER DECREASE



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About Ceonex

Established in the USA in 1998, Ceonex is a proven global Internet consulting and development company helping clients to create and implement fullservice digital business solutions. Combining diverse expertise in business strategy, technology, usability and design, Ceonex produces highly scalable business solutions and online user experiences.

Enabling businesses to heighten brand awareness, Ceonex strengthens customers' competitive advantage and provides them with opportunities to increase revenues and enhance productivity

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Client Quote

"...outstanding design work and timely implementation... a fabulous website that accurately captures both our mission and spirit..."

W. Michael Draper, CTO,
NetworkWorld, Inc.