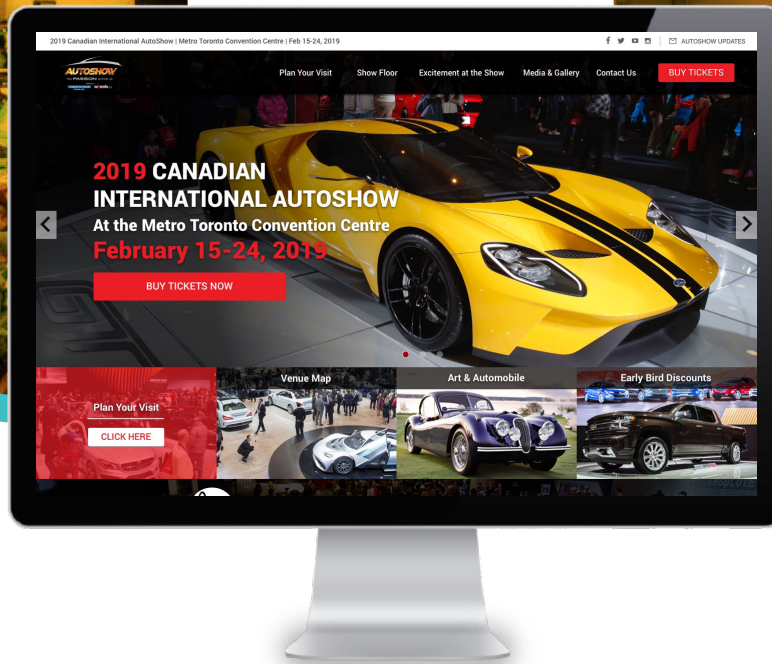


AUTOSHOW

CASE STUDY



STRATEGIC WEBSITE EVOLUTION HELPS THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW GROW & REACT TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR DIGITAL AUDIENCE

[2017 - 2019]

When the Canadian International Auto Show [CIAS]

set their sights on boosting attendance for the largest automotive expo in Canada, they had a tough act to follow... their own. Following record turnouts just in 2016, the Auto Show team tapped a long-standing relationship between their parent company [TADA, the Trillium Automotive Dealers Association] and the core team at Vicimus, unleashing a compact series of insider website strategies propelling their online ticket sales and attendance to new heights in 2017. A trend that continued to grow as the site was refined each year that followed.

To update their web presence as a branch of Canada's largest automotive association, the CIAS team had plenty of ideas for connecting their consumer audience with the content, branding and online ticket purchases they wanted to achieve. The challenge was to offer all of the information-rich, authoritative and high-impact content their exhibitors, media partners and sponsors demanded, too.

THEIR BIGGEST CONCERN

More importantly, the website needed to offer attendees a simple, seamless and irresistible portal to buy tickets right on the site... capturing their purchasing dollars at the same time the high-traffic site engaged their attention. But you can't just say buy and expect visitors to purchase without building excitement for the show. For CIAS, their biggest concern for the days leading up to the show was "Whatever it takes, keep the site live." Otherwise, they'd lose thousands of dollars by the minute, because so much money flows through the site in that first wave of visitors.

For a solution to the show's intense web traffic and multi-media-hungry requirements, CIAS liked how Vicimus' background and experience in marketing, technology, branding and design stood out as much as our 16-year history in automotive. Functioning best as a strategic and creative partner, they trusted our understanding of not only the various needs of multiple stakeholders, but also the



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entire automotive industry. Autoshow.ca isn't just an expo, it's a significant impact on various consumers, dealers, OEM and vendors annual success – so the website needed to support them.

AFTER ALL, CIAS DOES MORE THAN JUST STAGE CANADA'S LARGEST AUTOMOTIVE EVENT...

Manufacturers, dealers, and a lot of allied industries are involved, too. So it's critical for a strategic partner to understand and work with them all. With Vicimus, it was very much a peer-to-peer conversation, as we organized the site to meet everyone's needs and provide a consultant relationship that offered equal ground for everyone at the table. Starting with a list of requirements, then detailed wireframes and finally design look and feel.

At first glance, countless social media and multi-media innovations had entered the traffic-generating mainstream that the new site had to support. Content-rich sites like Instagram and Facebook Live had become a significant driver for traffic, attention, engagement and live updates, to be integrated into the auto show's new media hub. And over the next three years more effort was spent to drive traffic from these sites to autoshow.ca. Once of the largest drivers being Facebook as the Autoshow began to conduct Facebook Live events of show talks and interviews.

Even more urgent, CIAS wanted the site to represent their media, sponsorship and exhibition partners -- each with their own ideas and access requirements for adding information-rich articles, entertaining videos and featured content highlighting the show's events. They'd also need to distribute press releases and announcements throughout the show's run, without overloading the servers on high-demand media days during the show's launch.

Significantly, as mobile usage increased dramatically in the years leading up to the 2017 launch, we saw it making up more than half of the site's viewer traffic. So, all of the photo galleries, videos, and call-outs, mentioning every one of the exhibitors paying to be at the show, also required robust content to be fully supported in mobile with smaller page loads while still giving that brochure quality content and delivering excitement. That's why the whole design was fully mobile-responsive, with several specific decisions making it more adaptive than responsive to avoid impacting the mobile users' viewing experience.

"We are absolutely thrilled with the new structure and design of our AutoShow website. The entire project was completed quickly and efficiently in the short time line we had, and we've received such positive feedback from our consumers. The communications and customer service of their entire team was outstanding. Thank you Vicimus!"

Stephanie Thompson | Manager, Marketing & Operations
Canadian International AutoShow



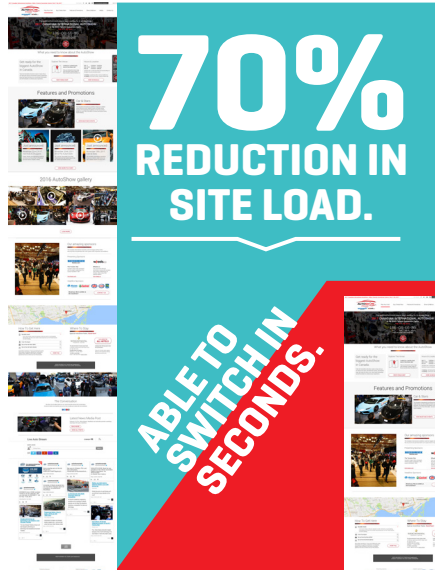
MAKING COMPLEX THINGS SIMPLE

Not surprisingly, as the site grew in complexity, it was critical to keep things as simple and free-flowing as possible, for viewers and media partners alike. So the agenda, scheduling and ticket-buying sections of the site were specifically designed with ease of use and multi-user access in mind.

For example, the Toronto Star could put up any content they wanted, and download the hi-res images they needed without affecting the speed, reliability or quick content delivery that viewers enjoyed. In fact, several media companies uploaded hi-res videos, and built out many of their media releases live from their headquarters at the show.

With this much activity, it's rare to see a site that gets traffic spikes in only 3 days like the CIAS site did. So it was structured for scale and built with multiple backups, with

strategic details that went beyond just the tech involved. For example, the Vicimus team built two versions of the homepage, including the regular full-content page and a



lightweight , scaled-down page that was easy to switch to the second it started to get REALLY overloaded. So the team was actively engaged, ready to respond to the site's intense traffic surges and flow on a moment's notice.

Knowing the site would be going from very little traffic to literally hundreds of thousands

of viewers in a day, Vicimus analyzed all aspects of the site's popularity, anticipating what was going to happen and planning ahead. This addressed one of CIAS' key concerns... "What's the contingency plan? Let's make sure we know what we'll do when it gets heavy, because we know how heavy it will get."

From the start, the site was a beast, made to handle an amazing amount of traffic. And we reacted quickly to switch out the front page on demand, as needed. To avoid site overloads, we transferred a lot of the heavy lifting to separate servers, automatically archiving media files and hosting them externally for easy downloads. This was one of our most successful strategies, reducing server stresses and making the whole site load reliably at least 100% faster.

Our focus on the Buy Tickets button positioning and the user experience of trying to purchase a ticket online ensured it was a simple, seamless task. First thing you'd see when you came to the site was some show information and a Buy Tickets button. So whether you're on mobile or desktop, the focus is still on driving conversions to buy tickets.

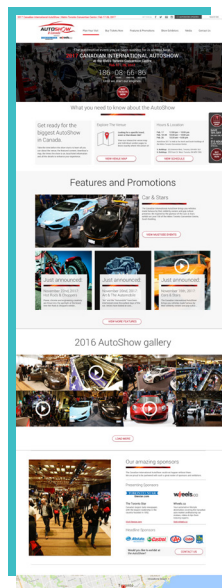
Regardless of where you are there is a call out for buying tickets. With call outs in the global nav, embedded in content and living as a sticky side bar that followed you no matter what page you visited. The strategy was to excite them but

drive them to the ticket portal. The strategy has worked year over year as we continued to adjust content, streamline pages and evolve content to react to the traffic flow and the CIAS' strategies each year.

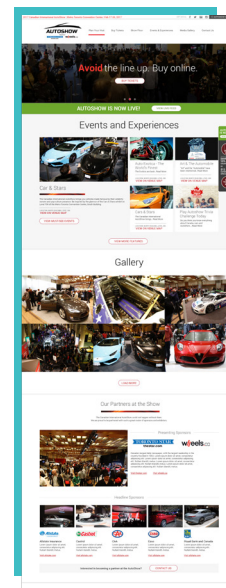
EVOLUTION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

2017 was a great start. We saw a huge improvement from the previous year leaving our client very excited. Within a few months of wrapping up the launch we started to talk about 2018. Key additions to the site update for that year centered around evolving content and adding more. As well as adding flexibility. CIAS maintains the content themselves on autoshow.ca. So the backend of the site has always been very robust, allowing them to quickly add and edit content with the site automatically optimizing uploads for each sections requirement.

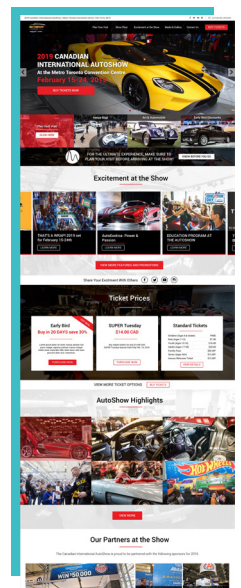
Some of the biggest evolutions came to social support in 2018's update including a "live bar" which was turned on to direct the large traffic to Facebook Live feeds when they were happening. The home page was also made modular. Each section can be moved and reordered as well as hidden. This let the CIAS team feature tickets at key times as a hero section and then switch to Plan Your Visit information and Show Features within seconds.



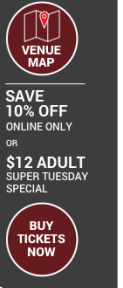
2017



2018



2019

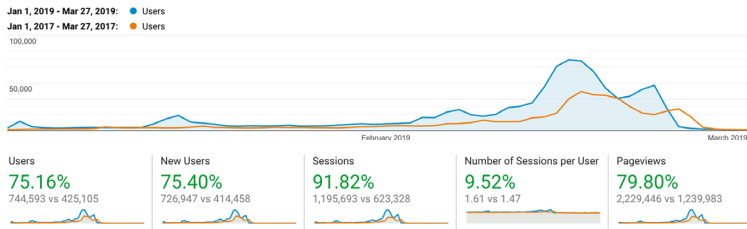




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Any pages that saw low traffic in 2017 that were not a key part of the CIAS' strategy were removed while other pages were consolidated and streamlined. Next to the home page and tickets – which sees 50% of all traffic, the features for what at the show are very popular. The exhibitors and planning pages don't get nearly as much traffic...that is until the show starts. Then all those ticket buyers start to look at how to get to the venue, where to park, who is actually exhibiting and where they are located, making these sections become heavy use pages for the 10 days the show is on. Especially in mobile.



PAGE RANKINGS Finally, 2019 saw a full site design refresh.

1. Home Features and functions for the most
2. Tickets part were kept because at this point we
3. Questions know what works well for the visitors.
4. Features Our attention moved to creating a fresh,
5. Exhibitors new site look with larger imagery to help build excitement and drive more traffic to ticket purchases. The venue map was updated to be more functional and useful. A more focused global navigation with less choice and more value per section and throughout the site Call-To-Action banners drive awareness of what was at the show so visitors were presented to rather than searching.

The AutoShow is a family event now and many of the features are catering to a much wider demographic and like the show, the website continues to evolve year after year to better fit their needs and the CIAS' strategies.

LAST UPDATED APRIL 2019.

THE RESULTS?

All told, the 2017 Canadian International Auto Show set a new attendance record for the second year in a row. After the show's 10-day run, 339,590 people came to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre for the Auto Show, eclipsing the old record of 320,000 set in 2016. This was broken again in 2018 with 358,842 attendees and nearly reaching the 2018 record in 2019 with 357,745 – a little more than 1,000 people shy of the all-time record. However, though traffic was close to equal they still set attendance records on four days including a one-day all-time high of 54,632 visitors on the Sunday of Family Day weekend.

Since the 2017 Vicimus site launch we have continued to see site traffic grow. Between January and March, the site has seen 549,434 visitors in 2017 then a huge jump in 2018 to 831,866 visitors and most recently 972,857. Comparing 2017 to 2019 we have seen over a 75% increase in new users, 91% increase in sessions [1.19M vs 623,328], and a 9.5% increase in number of sessions per user [1.61 vs 1.47]. Almost off of this traffic happening over the week leading up to the show and the 10 days the venue is open. Mobile user traffic has continued to grow during the month of the show [February] and was up 14% and sessions up 20% in 2019 vs 2018.

As traffic, sessions and the number of active users on the site simultaneously has continued to increase during the heavy days of the auto show our development and design has kept pace. Since the launch of our partnership in 2017 the site has continued to perform beautifully, reliably... and profitably.

INTERESTED IN PARTNERING WITH VICIMUS?

Vicimus is not only a software creator but also offers creative and strategic services to clients in the automotive industry. Contact us if you are interested in partnering or discussing your needs. We love to help companies evolve and succeed.