

Volvo Cars Drives Efficient Domain Name Strategy



Client: Volvo Car Corporation

Key facts:

- Operates in 70+ markets
- Web platform spanning 90 sites in 36 languages

Domain Portfolio:

- 1500 domain names (prior to optimization)

Volvo Car Corporation is one of the premier automotive brands and is highly regarded for quality and safety worldwide. Their online presence is extensive and has become integral to the company’s global operations. Volvo Cars’ website platform comprises 90 different sites in 36 languages spanning 70 geographical markets. All of these websites are centrally managed by the Interactive Marketing Department which also manages the organization’s substantial domain name portfolio.

The platform is managed by Sofia Heddson Fransén, Interactive Marketing Development Manager, who runs a lean team and relies on a network of experienced suppliers to provide specialized expertise and, in the case of domain names, an outsourced domain management function.

Volvo Cars has been working closely with Melbourne IT DBS since 2001. The relationship began with Melbourne IT providing domain name management and online brand protection. As their website requirements became more complex they have also leveraged the expertise of Melbourne IT’s Web Traffic Services team, resulting in a strong working partnership. Most recently, a key project was helping Volvo Cars create a domain name policy and optimize their domain portfolio. **The result was a 50% reduction in the size of the portfolio without additional risk exposure.**

A runaway portfolio

Over time Volvo Cars had acquired over 1500 domain names. “When the current team first took on responsibility for the company’s public facing domains, our domains were all over the place,” explained Sofia Heddson Fransén. “And the understanding and application of domain names varied considerably between markets.” Because there was no clear strategy in place (with registrations focused on product names and campaign names as well as the main brand), the portfolio was constantly increasing.

One of the team’s core challenges was how to effectively use domains to both promote and protect their online brands across the multiple markets, geographies and languages in which they operate. “Some key questions that we had to address were around whether to have one domain for each campaign, one for each car model, and so on...” said Sofia. So Volvo Cars asked Melbourne IT to help them create a domain strategy and policy that would meet their promotional requirements and also maintain their risk tolerance.

Creating the right Domain Name Policy

The Melbourne IT team worked with Volvo Cars to understand their business needs and translate those needs into a comprehensive domain name policy. After detailed requirements analysis and a

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Interactive Marketing Development
Manager,
Volvo Cars Corporation

full portfolio audit, the project team was able to identify the most relevant criteria to shape the policy. It was decided to focus the portfolio on the main brand (and defensive registrations for it) and migrate other words and campaigns into sub-domains.

“The domain name policy that Melbourne IT helped us create has been a huge help in guiding subsequent domain management,” said Sofia. “We are now able to make informed decisions around what we should or shouldn’t be doing by following these guidelines.”

The team has also realized benefits when working with Volvo Cars’ extensive dealer network. Dealers frequently come to Sofia’s team with specific domain questions and requests – something that had contributed to the uncoordinated growth of the portfolio in the first place. “Now, in these situations the Domain Name Policy provides clear guidance as to what should and shouldn’t be done, saving time and helping to develop a common understanding,” added Sofia.

Creating a smarter portfolio through optimization

Once the policy was created, the existing domain name portfolio was reviewed to identify how closely the domain names matched with the new policy. Analysis revealed that out of 1500 domains approximately 40% were compliant with the parameters of the policy, which meant there was significant potential for optimization and cost saving. Next, Melbourne IT undertook a detailed portfolio optimization exercise based on the analytical model developed from the policy.

A key component of the analysis was balancing risk. Domain traffic potential – a key driver for both the brand owner and potential cyber squatters – was also an important criterion in assessing which domains to keep. Domain names with low traffic potential pose little infringement risk and are likely candidates for disposal. To classify domain names based on traffic potential Melbourne IT has developed an analysis tool that combines sophisticated algorithms, search engine optimization metrics and data from pay per click (PPC) analysis to zero in on domain names that fit specified client parameters. This methodology and analysis was applied across the Volvo Cars portfolio and translated into an actionable set of recommendations. “With their expertise and decision support tools, Melbourne IT was able to provide a clear set of recommendations to effectively implement Volvo Cars’ new policy across the domain name space and provide substantial cost savings,” said Sofia.

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The analysis also identified gaps in the portfolio for the main brand which resulted in some additional registrations. In parallel, a communications initiative was rolled out to communicate the new policy to all Volvo Cars’ markets in order to maximize the effectiveness of the implementation and gain buy-in for a more centralized approach to domain management moving forward.

Results

As a result of the optimization project and subsequent implementation, Volvo Cars has been able to successfully reduce their domain portfolio by approximately 50% of which more than 80% of domains are now compliant with their domain policy. This has translated into cost savings of approximately €40K per year with no additional risk exposure. Sofia’s team was then able to reallocate budget into other areas such as brand protection and web traffic analytics.

Outsourced domain name management

As well as helping to optimize Volvo Cars’ domain name strategy, Melbourne IT also plays a key role in the day-to-day management of their domain portfolio. By outsourcing this function, Volvo Cars is able to keep their internal team lean and benefit from industry expertise.

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