

Case Study

Northwoods Strategic UX Overhaul Increases User Engagement & Conversions

Web Marketing Association Recognizes Website with Standard of Excellence Award



Client Snapshot

Industry: Travel and Entertainment **Audience:** B2C

About: The Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau (WDVCB) is the official tourism destination marketing organization for Wisconsin Dells, “The Waterpark Capital of the World!®.” People come from near and far to experience the area’s distinctive mix of natural resources and man-made fun. WDVCB’s mission is to grow the economic impact of Dells tourism through marketing, public relations, and development efforts that serve both visitors and its members.

Visit: wisdells.com



The WDVCB website acts as a digital front door for the wide range of amenities Wisconsin Dells has to offer, including parks, restaurants, hotels, and activities operated by the bureau’s partners. The previous site—built by Northwoods five years earlier—needed a design refresh, and the organization wanted a data-backed approach and strong user experience (UX) to achieve continued success for its members. Northwoods was first brought on to develop the website strategy, but WDVCB was so impressed by the strategic vision we presented—illustrated through structured data research, wireframing, and simplified navigation—they engaged our team to execute a complete redesign and UX overhaul.

Situation

- WDVCB needed to redesign its website to offer a modern, mobile-friendly user experience and reflect the organization’s new membership model.
- Over time, the previous site had become difficult to navigate, dated, and not representative of WDVCB or the Dells name—a major detriment for a highly commercial, travel-industry organization.
- The WDVCB team was happy with Titan CMS, an enterprise content management system powered by Northwoods, but was in need of a new strategy and design refresh.
- An old Trip Builder tool was seldom used and driven by micro-level partner data, making it difficult to manage and generating a narrow set of results.

Solution

- The Northwoods team used website analysis, heat maps, persona development, and survey results as a foundation for creating UX improvements and simplified, mobile-friendly navigation.
- Working closely with WDVCB, Northwoods developed a strategic approach that highlights the great experiences the Dells has to offer, serving content that caters to every type of visitor.
- A reimagined, simplified Trip Builder lets users quickly plan their adventure and receive personalized results, created through an easily managed back-end system of blog tags and filters.
- Drawing on user data to inform the partner detail pages, Northwoods developed new architecture and design elements to be flexible and dynamic. This allows partner pages to be customized based on their partner tier (one of six).

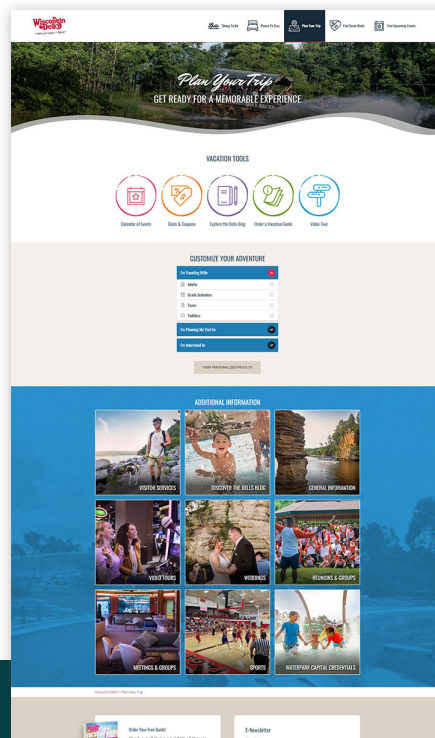
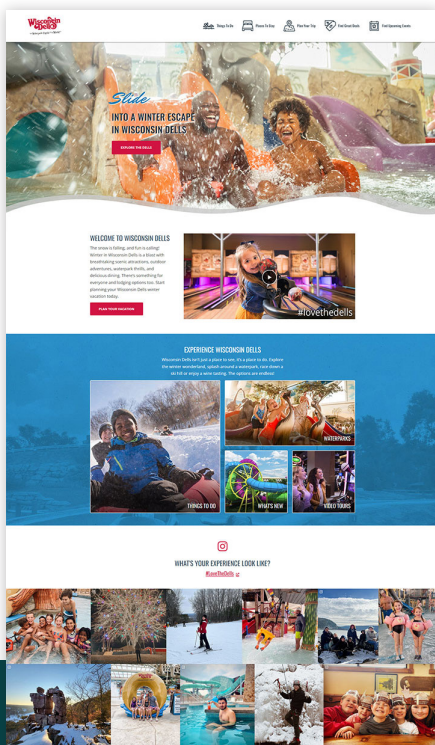
Outcome

- WDVCB has a beautiful, user- and mobile-friendly website with a new look and feel that satisfies the needs of longstanding partners through great UX and dynamic partner detail pages.
- The Web Marketing Association WebAwards—an international competition that recognizes the people and organizations responsible for developing some of the best websites on the Internet today—awarded the WDVCB website a Standard of Excellence Award for Travel.
- Since the launch of the redesigned website, there has been an increase in clicks on individual partner detail pages and a 15% uptick in conversions.
- The website redesign exceeded the WDVCB team's expectations and met both their budget and timeline requirements.



“We have worked with Northwoods for many years due to their expertise in providing optimal user experiences. For our most recent redesign, Northwoods recommended a deeper experiential approach for travelers and vacationers looking to explore all the Dells has to offer, and perhaps plan their trip online. It was important this experience be consistent across all device types. Information regarding our many hotels, waterparks, dining, shopping, and amusement options had to be easy to navigate and engaging. Their strategic approach to search and content development has resulted in higher traffic to our site. They are responsive to our needs, honest, transparent, and just a fun team to work with.”

— Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Wisconsin Dells Visitor & Convention Bureau, Inc.



Design

WDVCB is fortunate to have a robust image library, which we leveraged to vividly capture and communicate the atmosphere of the Wisconsin Dells experience. Organic wave shapes are carried throughout to add a sense of playfulness and reference water—a shoutout to the area's many water parks. Northwoods designers incorporated iconography into both the navigation and trip filter, creating an overall effect that's fun, polished, and extremely visual.