



Case Study – Imperial Chemical Industries plc (ICI)

ICI's corporate website at www.ici.com disappeared after the company was taken over in 2008, but was one of the best known in the FTSE 100 index for more than a decade. Throughout its history the ICI website competed successfully with its peers for just a fraction of their budgets.

ICI's requirements

ICI's website was managed by GP Media working with the company's corporate communications team across four different incarnations. The first site appeared in the mid-1990s, the second in 2000, once again in 2002 and the final version of the site appeared in 2006.

Solutions

The 2000 website, designed and built by the London based consultancy 9600 Design, featured an interactive shareholder area, commonplace today, which allowed users to register for news and order hard-copy documents.

Even more shareholder functionality was added in 2002 when the site was once more changed, this time to emphasis the changes in the company as it became focused on the speciality end of the chemical industry and the larger industrial side of the business was divested. The change in focus from chlorine and plastics to flavours and fragrances was marked on the website by clean white backgrounds and an industry leading navigational system which allowed users on any page to get around the whole site more quickly.

Business web guru and FT columnist David Bowen wrote at this time that in his view ICI, "had one of the best corporate sites".

Results

As well as getting across a complex new strategy, the final incarnation of ICI's website in 2006 specifically targeted investment analysts, retail and bond investors and journalists.

This was the first ICI website to achieve full accessibility status, certified by the disabled charity Shaw Trust, who specialise on rigorously testing corporate sites using disabled testers. Webmaster Geoff Paddock spent many hours with design agency Freestyle New Media to develop the concept of the site and put the jigsaw together. A new careers area allowed job-hunters in Europe and the USA to apply for graduate entry positions and individual jobs.

The result was undoubtedly ICI's best ever website, managing to steer disparate audiences to their target destinations, and all of that achieved for a fraction of the budget many other FTSE companies spent on web communications.

The website remained live for almost a year following the company's takeover by Dutch chemical company Akzo Nobel, before being absorbed into the web communications of the company in December 2008.

A [more detailed history](#) of ICI's corporate website can be seen on this site.