WP engine

OSCARMIKE

Industry
Ecommerce

Client Site
OscarMike.org

Challenge
Speed and performance issues

Results
Massive speed and performance improvements with the Mercury platform from WP Engine Labs.

"Performance across the board has definitely gone up."

– Zach Stepek
Developer
OscarMike.org

OscarMike.org Fulfills
The Need For Speed

VETERAN-OWNED ECOMMERCE APPAREL SITE PERFORMS 'RIDICULOUSLY FAST' ON WP ENGINE LABS' MERCURY PLATFORM

The Company

Oscar Mike (OscarMike.org) is apparel with a mission. The company, which comprises Veterans, athletes, artists, and individuals from all walks of life, is a 100 percent American-made apparel line that gives all of its profits to its 501c-3 non-profit foundation. The Veteran-founded and Veteran-owned company uses 100 percent of this money to help rehabilitate injured Veterans through adaptive sporting events. The term "Oscar Mike" comes from military radio jargon used on the front lines. It translates to "On the Move." Being Oscar Mike means being active, staying positive and living life to its absolute fullest.

The Site

OscarMike.org is the ecommerce and information website for Oscar Mike. The site offers more than 200 unique products.

The Challenge

Oscar Mike's ecommerce site is media and resource intensive. It leverages a large number of images and graphics (several for each individual product). "There's a lot going on," said Zach Stepek, OscarMike.org's developer.

With its previous hosting provider, OscarMike.org suffered errors, downtime, and other performance issues that the provider struggled to fix. Everything was slow, Stepek said, from the site itself to the WP admin dashboard.

As an ecommerce site, OscarMike.org needed a speed boost to engage customers and create sales opportunities.

"With ecommerce, your most important metric for conversion is the speed of your site," he said.

The site also needed to be able to withstand an unexpected traffic spike. While with its previous provider, Oscar Mike was mentioned on television during a Chicago Bears Thanksgiving day game. The rush of traffic crashed the site.

The Solution

OscarMike.org rebuilt and optimized its site and became the first ecommerce company to join the alpha program for Mercury, an innovative, experimental new platform from WP Engine Labs designed for sites that demand unparalleled performance and reliability. Mercury is an enterprise grade managed WordPress hosting platform that delivers high availability, geo-redundancy, master/master replication, and auto failover protection. At the center of Mercury is HHVM technology, an open source project created by Facebook designed to run PHP code linearly faster than standard PHP 5.5. Mercury provides an environment where WordPress can perform up to 10 times faster than with other hosts, resulting in conversion-boosting load time improvements, stronger visitor retention, massive scale, and the ability to handle unexpected traffic spikes with grace. Where WP Engine's standard platform delivers blazing speed and massive scalability, Mercury takes multi-clustered, highly available environments to the next level.

The Results

According to Stepek, OscarMike.org's move to the Mercury platform from WP Engine Labs sped up "everything."

"The site itself is ridiculously fast," he said, adding that at WordCamp Milwaukee he demoed the site and "everyone was amazed" by how quickly he was able to scroll through Oscar Mike's 200-plus products.

Before moving to Mercury, the site's time to first byte was roughly 4.5 seconds. With Mercury and additional optimizations, the time to first byte is down to 600 to 700 milliseconds.

"I've never seen a WordPress site as graphically intense and photo-oriented perform this fast," he said.

Stepek said the faster site spurred an almost immediate increase in conversions and resulted in fewer abandoned shopping carts. Increased speed also gives the Oscar Mike team the ability to upload new products more quickly and improves their time to respond to customers, which results in better customer service and a drop in the number of customer complaints.

"Performance across the board has definitely gone up," Stepek said. "It's dramatically improved. For us, that affects the bottom line and conversions. And because I don't have to worry as much about site performance, I can focus on the work we need to do on the backend and other optimizations. The platform is no longer restricting the site."

About WP Engine

WP Engine is a leading SaaS content management platform for websites and applications built on WordPress. Founded in 2010, the company is headquartered in Austin, Texas and has offices in San Francisco, California, San Antonio, Texas, and London, England.