

Boston Capital's redesigned Web site provides a valuable marketing resource and emphasizes the company's global reach

Boston Capital, headquartered in Boston, MA, is a real estate investment and advisory firm specializing in real estate and tax advantaged investments for multifamily housing, equity investment in market rate apartment communities and renewable energy developments. The existing Boston Capital Web site did not adequately represent the company's brand and had poor organization of content making it difficult for users to find content. Boston Capital looked to Bit Group to better position the global brand of the company and create a world-class user experience that could be carried across all of their Web entities.



Figure 1: Redesigned Boston Capital Web site homepage

Challenge: Providing a structure that accommodates priorities across both existing and emerging business lines

Boston Capital business lines include Affordable Housing, Conventional Real Estate, Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) and Renewable Energy. While the Affordable Housing and Conventional Real Estate were longer-term established businesses, the REIT, Mortgage Fund, Renewable Energy business lines were emerging business lines launched in the past five years. For Boston Capital it was important to appropriately promote and position the breadth of the company's business lines and meet the needs of the varied users on the Web site.

Other priorities on the Web site included providing a consistent brand identity, strengthening Boston Capital's credibility in the minds of existing and potential customers, and creating an experience to help foster relationships with investors and sellers. Boston Capital also wanted the Web site design to appeal to investors both within and outside the United States. The overall site design and user experience also needed to be scalable across a portfolio of extranet sites including the Individual Investor, Financial Advisor, Corporate Investors and CPA Extranet.

Solution: A world-class design combined with rich content and functionality to emphasize Boston Capital's global reach

Bit Group's consultants engaged a user-centered design approach to create a user experience that exactly met Boston Capital's business needs on the Web. To understand current and future perspectives of the business, Bit Group facilitated workshop sessions with key executive stakeholders at Boston Capital. The Bit Group team then conducted user profile analysis sessions to clarify the primary and secondary target audiences and their key needs. These sessions provided a visual

Boston Capital

CASE STUDY

“ Bit Group did a terrific job assimilating many different options and ideas into a coherent design that reflects Boston Capital's tradition as well as its future direction and strategy ”

Brian Madden
VP and Director of IT
Boston Capital



representation of the overall complexity of the business and the importance to reach out to different user constituents targeted along specific business lines.

Combined with knowledge of the business priorities and the Web site user needs, Bit Group executed a comprehensive design process, creating deliverables such as creative briefs, site maps, wireframes, visual composites, and final XHTML/CSS compliant templates. Bit Group also conducted an extensive heuristics analysis of the four extranet sites and provided recommendations for design & information architecture modifications. Finally, Bit Group worked closely with Boston Capital developers to implement the templates on the corporate and extranet sites.

The Results

- A modern Web site that provides a clean, warm, professional, usable and content-rich user experience. The common branding approach and visual design style carries across all of Boston Capital's Web entities.
- Clearly organized Web site content with an improved hierarchy that is easy and intuitive to navigate.
- A new Web site infrastructure that is easily maintainable by Boston Capital.
- The Web site provides for greater corporate accountability and ownership of content across different business units allowing better management of content across multiple business groups.

About Boston Capital

Boston Capital, headquartered in Boston, MA, is a real estate investment and advisory firm specializing in real estate and tax advantaged investments for multifamily housing, equity investment in market rate apartment communities and renewable energy developments. As of June 2007, Boston Capital's holdings included over 2,700 multifamily apartment properties in 48 states and the District of Columbia, constituting nearly 158,000 apartments with a development cost in excess of \$11.5 billion. Boston Capital is the fourth largest owner/investor of apartment properties in the country and the 11th largest owner of real estate property in general.

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36 Cameron Avenue,
Cambridge, MA 02140
617.876.8900
contactsales@bitgroup.com
www.bitgroup.com

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