

MINI

Trendsetting automotive manufacturer uses Adobe® Flex™ and Adobe AIR™ to extend its iconic MINI brand and lifestyle proposition through online marketing

BMW Group

www.MINI.com/shop



In Partnership With

Interone Worldwide

www.interone.de



Interone Worldwide GmbH
An Agency of BBDO Worldwide
Office München

Industry

Lifestyle Apparel and Accessories

Challenges

- Inspire users to agree to install marketing-focused software on their desktops
- Create a modular software concept to build long-term customer loyalty

Solution

- Rich, interactive desktop application
- Popular automobile manufacturer is strengthening brand loyalty by using Adobe Flex and Adobe AIR to deploy desktop-based rich Internet applications that deliver market news, events, and merchandise.

Results

- Increased customer engagement with MINI lifestyle proposition
- Rapidly developed and deployed a persistent, branded desktop widget
- Rolled out rewards points to sell online merchandise
- Enhanced brand loyalty and community

Systems At A Glance

- Adobe AIR
- Adobe Flash Professional
- Adobe Flex

Strengthening a popular brand

Few automobiles elicit such a passionate response from its owners as the MINI. With a global base of devoted owners and MINI aficionados, MINI continually seeks innovative ways to engage existing customers and attract new ones. “Our customers are typically strong supporters of our brand,” says Terry Dean Pepper, head of marketing communications at the BMW Group Merchandising & Lifestyle. “One of our goals is to enable them to stay engaged with us by delivering fun, relevant products and services.”

Working with the creative and technical team at Interone Worldwide, an agency of BBDO Worldwide, the BMW Group Merchandising and Lifestyle marketing team opted to use a solution based on Adobe Flex, Adobe Flash® Professional, and Adobe AIR to provide MINI enthusiasts with a unique digital product for use online or offline, at a customer’s convenience. Before committing to using Adobe Flex, Flash Professional, and Adobe AIR at MINI, Interone looked at several deployed Adobe AIR applications, including those for a news reader, a stock ticker for Wall Street, and desktop service for a leading online retailer. In each case, the companies using Adobe AIR had tangible, compelling reasons for promoting the use of Adobe AIR applications on employee or customer desktop computers.

Cost-effective development

From a development and deployment perspective, Adobe AIR met two key objectives for Interone and MINI—cost-effective creation combined with rapid development and deployment. Because Interone developers already had significant expertise using Flash Professional, they could leverage their existing skills to quickly deliver an Adobe AIR desktop application.

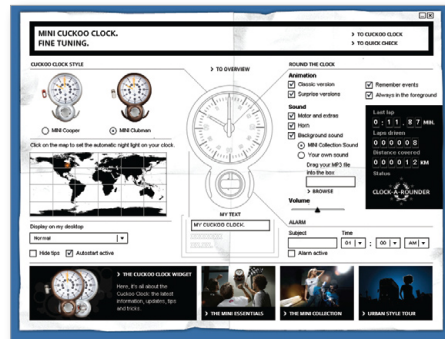
According to the agency, one of the biggest challenges in creating software for marketing is the cost of development. To maximize a campaign’s effectiveness, development costs need to be kept in check and the ability to rollout applications on schedule is a priority. Interone realized that traditional development methods were not feasible for this project. “Adobe AIR offered an ideal mix of innovation, while still being grounded in proven, familiar technologies,” says Michael Schwarz, account director, Interone Worldwide. “For a high-profile brand like MINI, innovation is essential, as is mitigating project risks.”

An essential for MINI customers

Taking a long-popular product—the MINI Cuckoo Clock—and offering it as an Adobe AIR widget to run on people’s desktops proved to be a good first bet for MINI. “Over a recent two-month period, we had more than 10,000 visitors to our MINI online shop site check out the Adobe AIR MINI Cuckoo Clock widget,” says Pepper. “This means visitors spend more time looking at our products and services, and if they want, can download their own Cuckoo Clock to run on their desktops.”

The traditional MINI Cuckoo Clock is a bestseller in the MINI lifestyle product range and boasts a unique desktop clock in the shape of the MINI’s speedometer. The Adobe AIR widget—available at www.MINI.com/shop—is a virtual replica of the real MINI Cuckoo Clock.

Using the Adobe AIR MINI Cuckoo Clock widget, the user defines the desired display options—MINI Cooper or MINI Clubman—and the time zone through a configuration screen (left image). The night version of the Clubman-clock captures the attention of the user via a stunt show (right image).



“The Cuckoo Clock delivered in Adobe AIR extends the MINI brand and lifestyle proposition and provides a constant connection with our customers. AIR supports our efforts to build one-to-one experiences and relationships with our customers.”

Terry Dean Pepper,
Head of marketing
communications,
BMW Group Merchandising &
Lifestyle

“The Cuckoo Clock delivered in Adobe AIR extends the MINI brand and lifestyle proposition and provides a constant connection with our customers,” explains Pepper. “AIR supports our efforts to build one-to-one experiences and relationships with our customers.”

Similar to the real, wall-mounted clock, the virtual MINI Cuckoo Clock features a MINI that drives out of the garage and circles the clock every hour. While online, the MINI Cuckoo Clock widget maintains a constant connection to the MINI server, automatically allowing new updates and services to be made available to users. The spiffy compact car doesn’t just drive in circles. It can perform a wide variety of tricks—like racing other MINIs on the desktop or speeding up ramps and jumping over other cars. In addition to these fun elements, the Adobe AIR application for MINI is also practical. It functions as a customizable alarm clock that can alert users about myriad events, including the ending of an eBay auction.

Monetizing the widget

The digital MINI Cuckoo Clock has all the important functionalities of a powerful Adobe AIR application. Users can drag and drop files from the desktop onto the clock and change the background music. The Cuckoo Clock stores local information inside a SQLite database. For the user, all this takes place out of site.

The configuration screen, which was cleverly designed in the form of a slightly used MINI user manual, was kept simple on purpose. The user controls the display and can customize time zone display options. Through the Adobe AIR widget, Interone can cull valuable marketing information regarding location of the MINI customer to learn more about the customer base.

“We have to ensure customer privacy, and Adobe AIR allowed us to meet the necessary security standards.”

Michael Schwarz,
Account director,
Interone Worldwide

To monetize the widget, the MINI Cuckoo Clock has an odometer that counts the rounds driven and converts them to kilometers. The purpose of the odometer is strictly a marketing tool. For example, the more the MINI drives, the more bonus points could be accumulated to use as discount points for shopping on the MINI collection online store. Plans for this are still in development. “This type of engagement helps boost customer visits to our site and provides tangible benefits for our customers and for us,” says Pepper.

Small footprint, big advantages

The MINI Cuckoo Clock project triggered questions for Adobe AIR developers at Interone. Would all these animations and online connections create a high demand on the user’s processor? The first few performance tests immediately demonstrated that was not the case. “We configured update intervals to be within seconds, and the processor was not impacted much at all,” says Schwarz.

Another technological concern was protecting sensitive customer data within the Adobe AIR integrated encryption schema. “We have to ensure customer privacy, and Adobe AIR allowed us to meet the necessary security standards,” explains Schwarz.

Both client and agency say that leveraging the popularity of the MINI clock for the first Adobe AIR application was a smart decision. “It’s always satisfying to deliver an application that offers clear advantages to our customers and for us,” says Pepper. “The Adobe AIR widget helps us keep customers engaged anywhere at any time with our brand and services.”

For More Information

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