



GaPorts.com

Summary

To effectively reach Georgia Ports customers and other stakeholders, GPA began to review its website functionality at gaports.com in September 2018. Our goal was to create a simple experience on Georgia Ports' website, what we consider our virtual front door, that empowers our workforce, supports our customers, and stimulates our communities.

Communications challenges and opportunities

Because gaports.com is such large site, the challenge for the new domain was deciding which content would be given priority and which features needed to be streamlined.

Opportunities for the redesign included communication more clearly and effectively to our customer base and other stakeholders.

Overall Mission

The mission of the Georgia Ports Authority is to empower entrepreneurs, strengthen industries, sustain communities, and fortify families by relentlessly striving to accelerate global commerce. Our public relations mission is to communicate GPA's commercial advantages while highlighting our customer service, economic development, and sustainable practices.

Planning and Programming

OBJECTIVES: The goal of the new site (at gaports.com) was to create an attractive, easy-to navigate site using responsive design, so it is useful on all devices. GPA needed to keep the services used by shippers easy to get to, as well as provide information to any new user that may not be familiar with the ports. The design of the new site addresses problems from the previous site, such as difficulty finding specific data, non-intuitive navigation, and having too much information on the home page.



Target Audience: Beneficial Cargo Owners (BCOs), Ocean Carriers, 3PLs

Secondary Audience: Port users, elected officials, general public and media

Actions and Outputs

Timeline:

September 2018 – Chose design company for website overhaul

Sept. to December 2018 – Conducted in-person interviews with every department at Georgia Ports that had a presence on the old website and departments that would like to have a presence the new website.

Jan. to May 2019 – Worked with design company on modules and components for website

April 2019 – Contacted customers and other stakeholders to review the new site design and send feedback

May to August 2019 – Refined site design and began adding content and building site pages

September 2019 – Presented site design and analytics research to GPA Leadership team

September to December 2019 – Finished adding content and building site pages

January 2020 – Launched new gaports.com website

Fall 2020 – Planned follow-up interviews with customers and other stakeholders on usability of gaports.com.



Research

Initial planning for the website began with individual meetings with all company stakeholders including 20 separate departments such as Human Resources, Economic Development, Engineering, Safety, Protective Services, Operations, IT, Finance and Trade Development. From those meetings information was organized into “buckets” by theme and importance.

Also, interviews were conducted with frequent site users for their input on what would help make gaports.com useable for them. The outcomes of those interviews and meetings helped to set the design priorities.

Design priorities:

- Contacting the correct department of GPA needs to be simple
- Frequently used tools including MTO Schedules and InstaRate must work well and be easy to find
- Capabilities
- Intuitive, Simple Terminology
- De-Silo Information

The budget for the site was \$200,000.

Bold photographs have been a large part of GPA branding and were chosen carefully to draw the viewer through the site. The site design matches GPA's current clean themed branding.

GPA's immersive video products are also showcased on the site to display the scope of the terminals and cargo capabilities.



Outcomes

OBJECTIVE: Create an engaging, easy-to-navigate website to appeal to GPA's various stakeholders.

RESULT: GPA's Corporate Communications team collaborated with web developers to design a bold, responsive site, based on a modular grid for easy updating for promotions, news, terminal specifications and sales information. The website was launched Jan. 20, 2020.

OBJECTIVE: Increase the number of monthly visitors to gaports.com measured on Google Analytics.

RESULT: Between the launch of the site on Jan. 20, 2020 through May 2020, gaports.com recorded more than 263,979 visitors. During the same time last year gaports.com, the average number of monthly visitors was 23,000.

From January to June 2020, the average time spent on the redesigned gaports.com was 2 minutes 14 seconds. Previously, the average time spent on the site was 1 minute 47 seconds.