



Work Estancia Beef Case Study

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A growing concern for their health, the environment and the welfare of animals is driving more consumers to pay closer attention to what they eat and how that food gets to their table.

THE CLIENT'S CHALLENGE

This shift in consumer attitude creates a significant market opportunity for companies like Estancia Beef, a producer of free range, grass-fed beef. The three-year old San Francisco based company, with cattle ranches in the U.S., Uruguay and Argentina, is gaining consumer attention for its 'Estancia Way' to deliver a delicious and healthier beef product while at the same time setting standards for highly sustainable beef production and the humane treatment of animals.

Estancia Beef is sold through distributors to restaurants and local butcher shops and even direct to consumers nationwide. Since indirect sales means many others are involved in conveying the Estancia Beef brand value, the company recognized having a website that told the company story and built brand appeal was essential. In 2007 the company set about to overhaul its original website to appeal more to the growing number of health and environmentally conscious consumers.

"Our original site had lots of good content, but it focused more on the science of grass-fed beef than explaining the Estancia Way. We liked the site's original rustic look, but that too was geared more to a producer than a consumer," said Bill Reed, Estancia Beef co-founder. We needed a site would help us build a bond with our customers."

To help tell its story to an online audience, Estancia Beef selected Marker Seven, a premier web-solutions company headquartered in San Francisco, after reviewing a number of design firms. "We selected Marker Seven because they asked a lot of questions about our business objectives, our offering and the goals of site, and they had proven success with many market-leading companies," said Reed. "It was clear to us the team was strategic and viewed the engagement as a partnership."

MARKER SEVEN'S SOLUTION

As a Marker Seven client, Estancia Beef was inducted into the design firm's six-step process to ensure its new site met targeted goals.

During an initial discovery phase, Marker Seven learned everything possible about Estancia Beef's business, competition, culture and brand as well as the technologies employed in the initial site. From this discovery, Marker Seven was able to define the objectives for the site and provide strategic recommendations.

Once objectives were agreed upon, the Marker Seven team set out to design the site's visual approaches to engage the various Estancia Beef constituencies. Development followed, using the appropriate technologies to create the optimum site, then implementation in which the site was tested and reviewed before launch. In the final phase, Marker Seven evaluated the site over a period of time, making whatever changes were necessary.

The new Estancia Beef site employs some of the original rustic design, but the colors, the photos and other visual elements support the company's high-quality, environmentally safe and humane brand attributes. So too, the content is less scientific in tone, geared more to teach the consumer about the value of Estancia Beef's grass-fed production so that the purchase ultimately becomes a lifestyle decision.

Through its use of Drupal, an innovative open-source software solution especially geared to non-technical users, Marker Seven also has enabled Estancia Beef to handle its own updates of content, content organization, navigation, imagery, colors and typography. By supporting user and content management, blogging and community and social networking features, Drupal's modular framework also allows Estancia Beef to add these features as its online initiative grows.

THE RESULTS

"Marker Seven definitely helped us achieve our major goal to tell our story to customers and partners in a compelling way and to help build preference for our brand," said Reed.

"The new site serves as a teaching tool about our grass-fed beef and at the same time conveys our philosophy and value. We are getting great feedback about the site, not to mention the best part – an increase in customers and partner visits" said Reed.

About Estancia Beef

Estancia Beef leads the industry in high-quality grass fed production. Their production practices are good for people, good for the animal and good for the environment. Estancia is committed to providing their customers with complete transparency from pasture to plate. You know exactly what you are getting when you eat Estancia Beef. The beef tastes great and is good for you because they only sell beef from animals that graze in pastures on fresh green grass – no feedlots, ever. Their practices promote sustainability because grass-fed beef does not rely on fossil fuels in the form of fertilizers, pesticides, and diesel (used in the planting, harvesting, processing and transportation of grains). Estancia's products are very low impact and leave a small carbon footprint. When you look at the evidence, you can't deny it – Estancia grass-fed beef is the best.