



SHEPLER'S MACKINAC ISLAND FERRY

► www.sheplersferry.com

We knew this website needed to be Shepler's best sales person, customer service rep and data source.

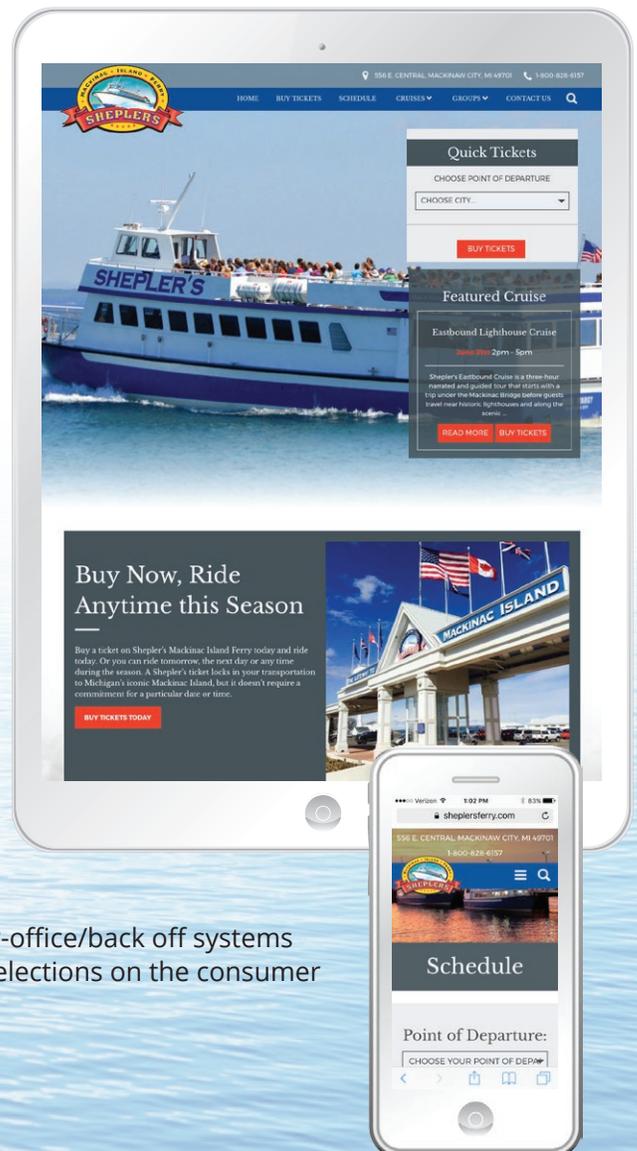
OVERVIEW

Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry required a web development project that was built with function in mind – providing the best possible external user experience, usable by all skill levels. For them, the site was/is not the end goal. The ability to use the site to ease the overwhelming manual ticketing system of the ferry would successfully change Shepler's business model. Ultimately, they want customers to be able to easily purchase tickets online, quickly and efficiently.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Create and implement an intuitive internal and external user experience to enable multiple functions and goals to be met. Included in this effort:

- Development of an intuitive online ticketing purchase system for a multifaceted ferry business (which includes round trip tickets, group ticketing, cruise/specialty event ticketing, and promotional pricing for select users).
- Development of a secure e commerce system that supported the ticketing functions, while simultaneously feeding the CRM system of the business and affording new reporting and predictive modeling functionality for staff.
- Development of a web application, wherein all inter-office/back off systems can be managed, up to and including the product selections on the consumer facing site.



STRATEGY

Our strategy was driven by research and understanding into the perspectives and needs of their three main user types: external direct buyers/searchers, external browsers, and internal users. Research and experience has found that the external audiences (both those who knew exactly what they wanted to buy and those who were just browsing) needed a site that was easy to navigate, with intuitive functionality which would lead to an increase in conversions. To achieve this set of goals, the online experience was redefined - navigational and page hierarchy was crafted to be beautiful while ushering users inherently to simple-to-use purchase options. Shepler's photos were incorporated to showcase the organization, copy was refreshed to ensure a consistent voice, and navigation was simplified.

Additionally, but no less important, was the internal user experience goal. With a full understanding of today's connected consumer, we knew that this website needed to be Shepler's best sales person, customer service rep and data source. To that end, equal attention was given to ensuring Google Analytics and Tag Manager were properly setup, and to building a robust CMS. By putting in extra effort during the build stage, we have ensured that Shepler's receives data that creates a plethora of usable data in one system - making it easier to make day-of changes to tickets or boat capacity, ability to push specific items (cruises, etc.), and the ability to use real customer behaviors to inform long-lens marketing efforts and business operations.

RESULTS

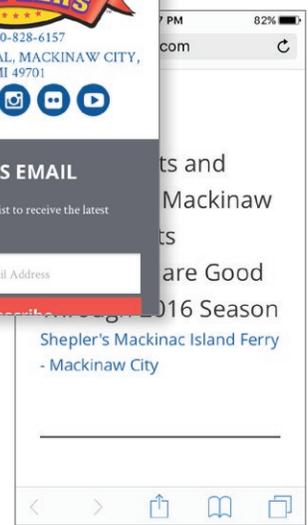
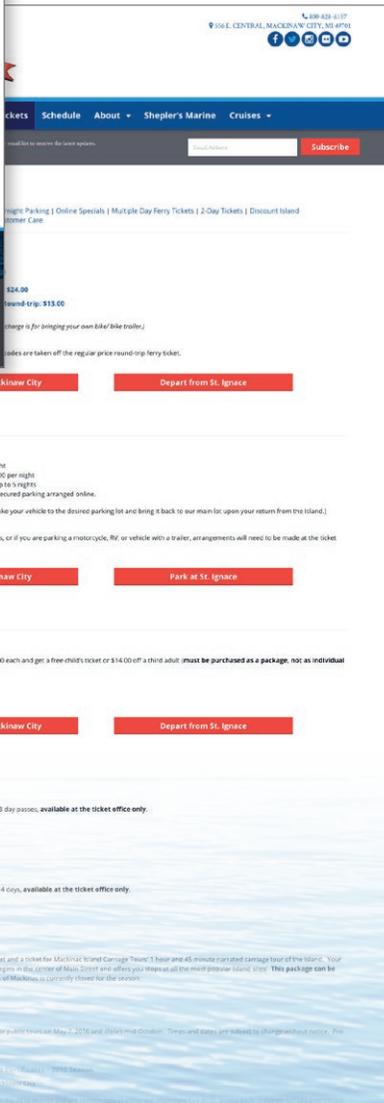
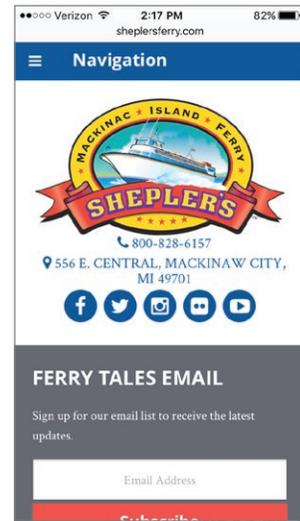
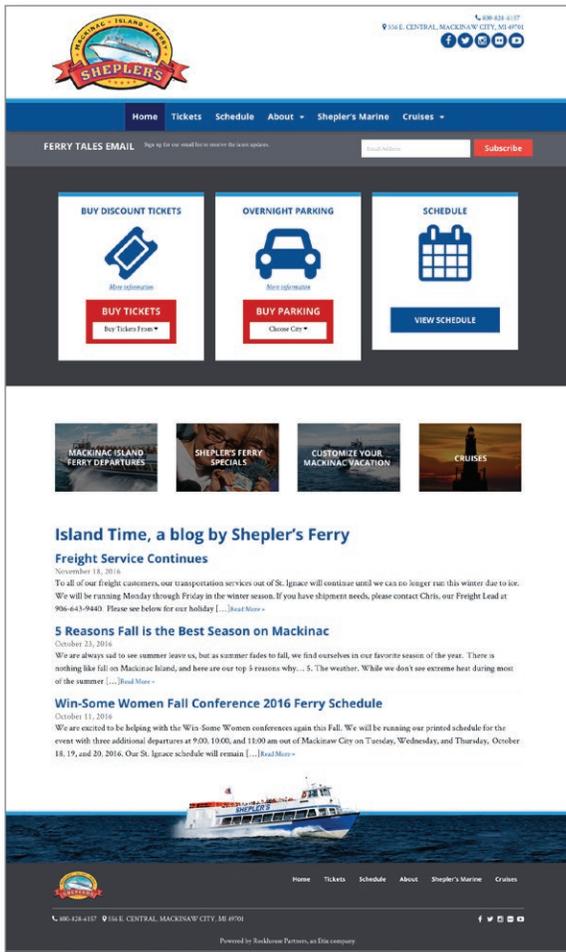
- Online ticket sales are up 29% YOY from Jan. - April
- Pageviews are up 20% YOY
- Site traffic is up 8% YOY
- New users are also up 4%



SERVICES/PRODUCTS PROVIDED

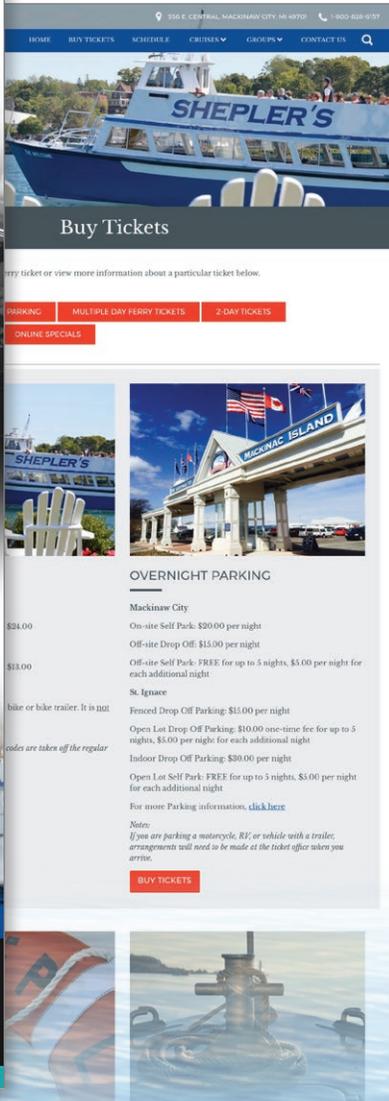
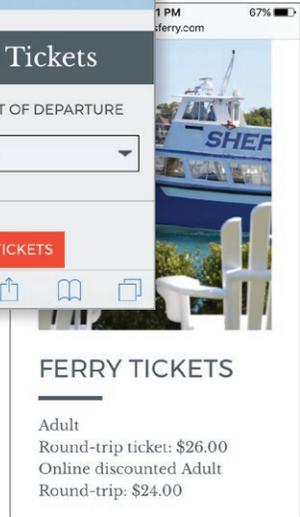
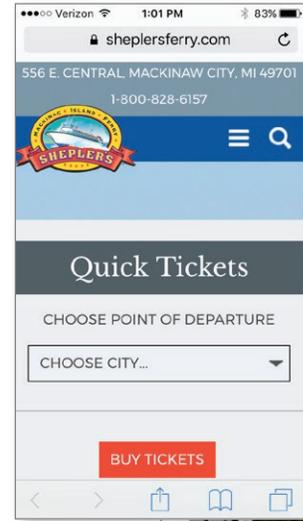
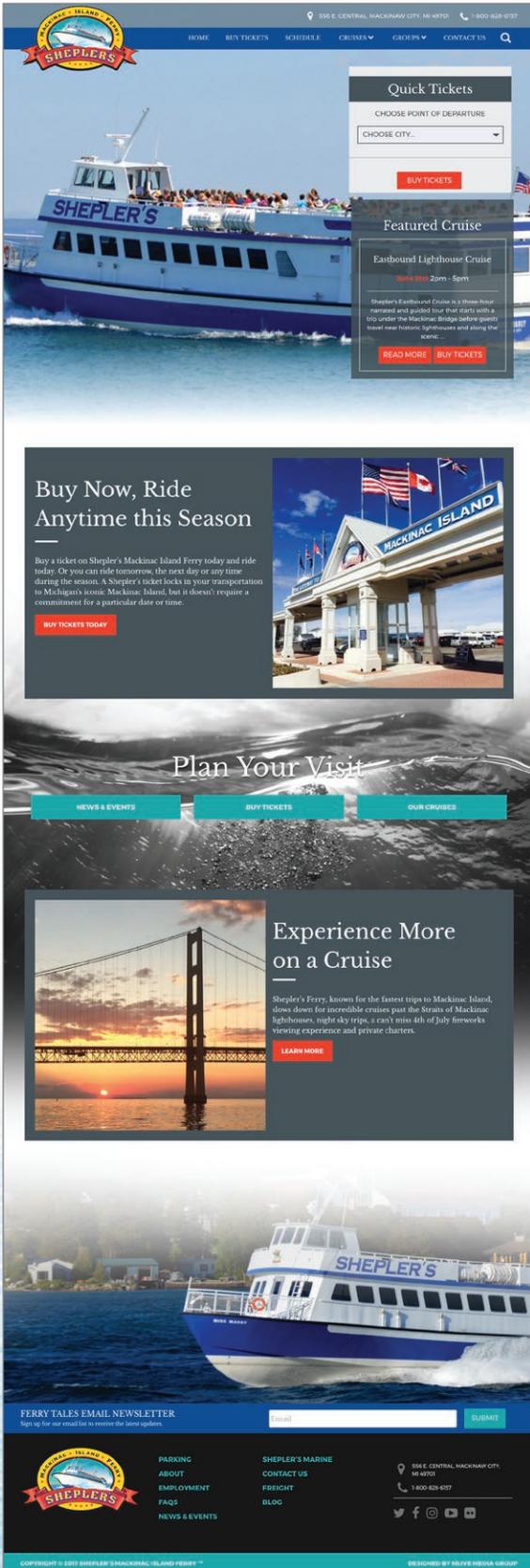
- Website redesign / development
- Existing content and creative asset merge and migration
- Creative asset and content creation
- Responsive CMS and POS platforms
- Technical and Customer Service

Previous website



Shepler's existing site had several obvious flaws. The pages were too text heavy and there was no established content hierarchy. This impacted both the user experience and the volume of conversion and ticket sales, meaning lost revenue for Shepler's.

New website



The new direction for the Shepler's website needed to reflect the Shepler's story, their new steps toward innovation, and include a modern touch to keep their online presence up to date. The colors for the website were taken from their logo, helping create a visual consistency and the images were brightened for a better visual vibrancy. The fonts include a mix of traditional and modern with both Serif and San-Serif styles. This helps keep the website feeling modern but still nods to their traditional past. All elements of the website have been considered to keep their online image consistent with their larger than life personality as a brand.