

WINKELSTRAAT.NL

Joost Van der Veer,
CEO and founder
of Winkelstraat.nl.

“A fashion ECommerce site is really dependent on images. Instart Logic has cut our initial load times for those images by 30% to 50%, and has dramatically improved our performance on mobile. You can see the difference with the naked eye. Those improvements keep our customers happy and give us better conversion rates. Instart Logic is very important for us.”

The Challenge



Fashion is all about images that show and sell an emotion. It's more than just a product. Fashion ECommerce sites are especially dependent on images. Winkelstraat.nl had grown quickly while serving the BENELUX market, but after initially strong success, the company was ready to take their web performance game global. That meant looking for a solution to accelerate the beautiful images and styles on the site to give users a standout digital experience regardless of their location anywhere on Earth, or of user's device type. Mobile was a particular focus. "Our users are 50% mobile and that's growing very quickly. It's our first priority," says Van der Veer. Coming from a heavy Ecommerce background, van der Veer knew that milliseconds matter for user retention and engagement.

WINKELSTRAAT.NL

— FASHION. BOUTIQUE STYLE —

Category:

ECommerce

Company:

Winkelstraat.nl

Location:

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Description:

Launched in 2012 as a next-generation high fashion shopping experience for Europeans, Winkelstraat.nl grew quickly to become the go-to destination for fashionistas seeking next-season looks from high-end couture houses at discounted prices. The company has millions of users and is one of the leading high-end designer online retail destinations in the Netherlands and Belgium. The team is obsessed with building a customer experience that is alive and visually engaging just like the beautiful clothing and accessories sold on their site.

The Challenge (cont.)



In particular, van der Veer understood that high-end shoppers would not wait for images to load, and that a top-notch web performance solution could mean millions in additional annual revenue for his startup. The highly technical team at Winkelstraat.nl deployed extensive optimizations to enhance performance from the server side to the network. "We have implemented a lot of improvements on the server side, from minimizing the JavaScript libraries and the CSS in the pages to using Varnish for HTTP acceleration and multiple caching layers to serve more of the site's dynamic content out of faster memory," van der Veer notes.

Winkelstraat.nl's content and offers change daily and the site has extensive personalization features. The team wanted to ensure that after the content left the servers, it would zoom to the user's device as quickly as possible and provide the best possible user experience. Van der Veer was concerned about accelerating the large, high-resolution images that the company creates in-house daily to highlight the looks onsite. "On product listing pages where you have a lot of images, it can take up to 3 seconds for images to start rendering and become visible. Until that time, the visitor will see nothing but a blank screen. We needed to bring that blank screen time down dramatically."



The Challenge (cont.)



Winkelstraat.nl was also looking for a web performance solution partner that was on the cutting edge of technology. As former game developers with an obsession for high performance, the team was well aware of the general stagnation in the Content Delivery Network market, and wanted to find a partner that was creating new and differentiated ways to accelerate dynamic content. In particular, they wanted a solution that worked well for highly dynamic content on mobile devices, something that tends to choke most CDNs. Furthermore, Winkelstraat.nl needed to have direct contact with smart engineers to ensure that they could communicate with their support team effectively about any architectural requirements and could quickly implement the necessary changes.

In summary, Winkelstraat.nl needed:

- The fastest possible image delivery solution for impatient users to accelerate dynamic content to any device type across all images sizes
- Mobile-first application delivery acceleration for the web that to future proof the company roadmap
- A cutting edge web performance partner that delivered ahead-of-the curve technology with a highly skilled and accessible engineering team

The Solution



After researching the available solutions for several months, Van der Veer focused in on Instart Logic. He was initially attracted to the firm by their high-profile venture capital backers such as Kleiner Perkins and Andreessen Horowitz and when he checked out the customer case studies on their site, he saw several companies that focused on luxury ECommerce that underwent similar issues when attempting to deliver very large, high-resolution images and accelerate dynamically generated content on mobile.

The team was also impressed by the differentiated technology solutions offered by Instart Logic such as Image-Streaming and HTMLStreaming. "HTMLStreaming sounded very logical to me and I was surprised no one else had thought of it before," says Van der Veer. When Instart Logic told him it could get a live trial up and running very quickly, Van der Veer took them up on the offer. Only a few days later, Instart Logic's engineering team had successfully redirected a tranche of test traffic onto the service.

The Result



The live trial showed immediate improvements in performance and was painless to put in place, requiring only a re-configuration of DNS setting. “The implementation was fast,” says Van der Veer. “Over one or two weeks the demo showed me real performance improvements. There was no development work or research done on my end. That was a really big upside.”

Additionally, moving to Instart Logic’s ImageStreaming and HTMLStreaming gave Winkelstraat.nl a dramatic boost in image delivery. “On product listing pages where you have a lot of images, we were able to cut load times by one or two seconds using Instart Logic’s technology,” says Van der Veer. “With ImageStreaming the page just shows up a lot faster. It gives the site a very snappy feel.”

On mobile, too, the difference was substantial. “We saw huge improvements across multiple site performance measurements; including bounce-rate and conversions. When we turned on the HTML streaming we saw even further improvements in pages that carry heavy JavaScript loads,” says Van der Veer, who plans to implement some of the additional unique and new features added by Instart Logic soon, including SmartVision, a revolutionary image categorization technology that could allow Winkelstraat.nl to slice an additionally 30% to 50% of the image data it serves to customers as part of initial web application loads.

The Instart Logic engineering team provided solid and competent support, even becoming experts in Winkelstraat.nl’s ECommerce environment to better understand Van der Veer’s needs. Despite a nine-hour time-zone difference, Winkelstraat.nl’s team knew they could always count on a rapid, intelligent response from Instart Logic at any time of day or night. “The Instart Logic engineering team are skilled people and the company worked hard to make sure we got what we needed, when we needed it, every time.” says Van der Veer. “The bottom line is that Instart Logic has cut our initial load times for large images by 30% to 50% and dramatically improved our performance on mobile. You can see it with the naked eye. Those improvements keep our customers happy and give us better conversions across our site. Instart Logic is very important for our business.”

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