Zicasso Case Study:
The Million Node Migration

Business Emphasis

Aimee Degnan /
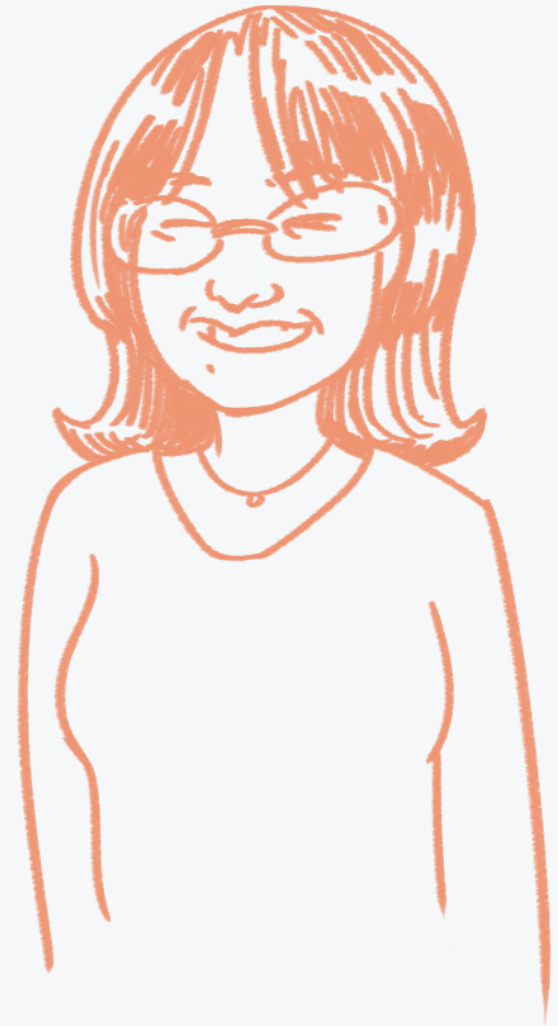aimee@hook42.com

zicasso
HANDCRAFTED TRAVEL

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Me

Aimee Degnan, CEO

- 1996 – Enterprise Web Tech & CMS
- 2006 – PMP, Stanford Advanced PM
- 2008 – Drupal
- 2010 – Agile: Scrum Master, Product Owner
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Who are we?

A boutique software development firm.

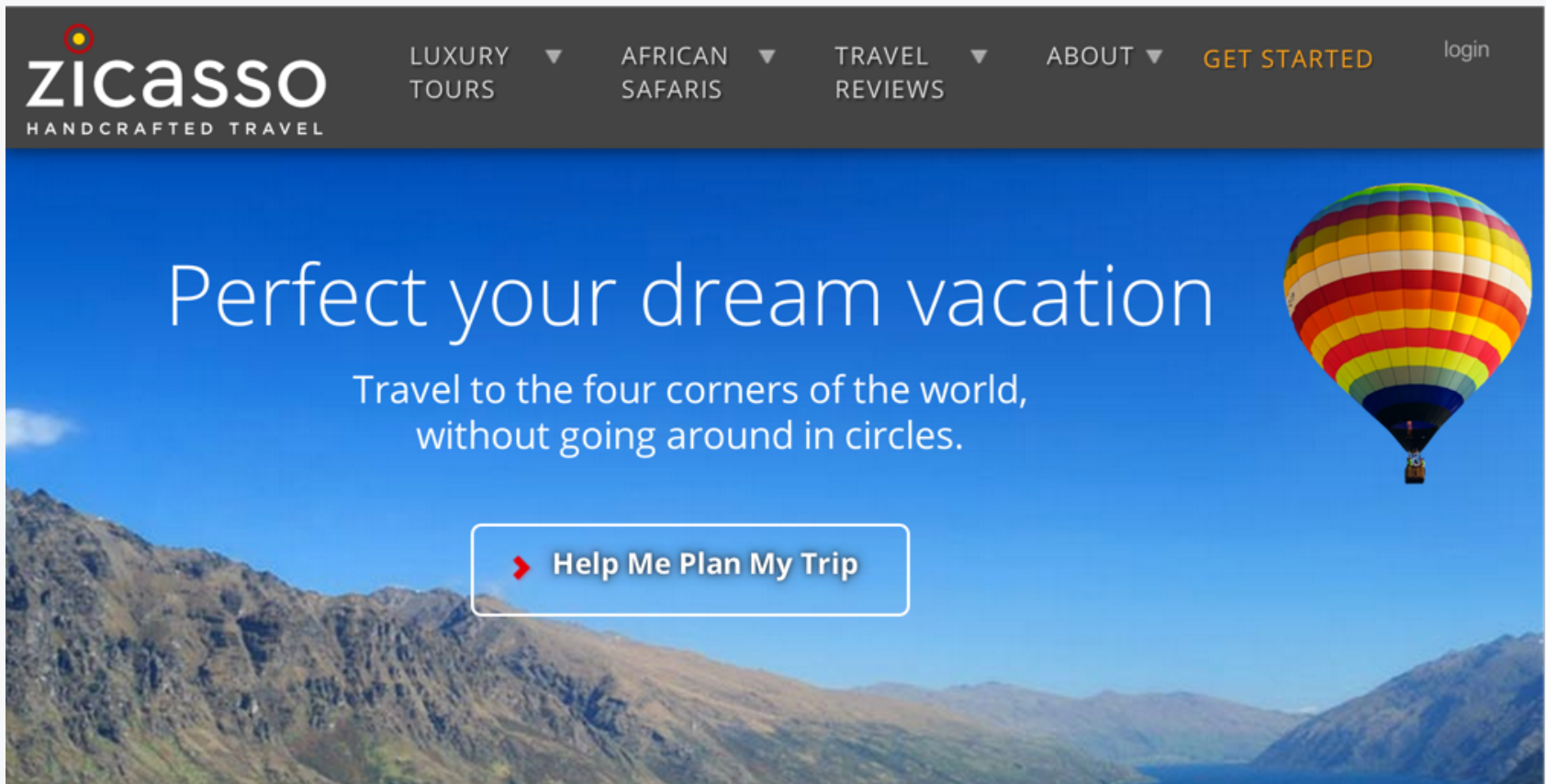Cater to both luxury clients and humanitarian efforts.

Specialize in complex projects.

Contribute to the community.

Focus areas: site rescue, migration / upgrades, multilingual, SEO, responsive design, digital strategy, business process improvements

zicasso.com
D5 to D7 migration & redesign

First Engagement

- Very limited for initial interview
- Educate client team about Drupal 7
- Is Drupal the right tool?
- Are we capable to do the work?
- Are we a good fit for each other?

As-Is Assessment

- Extent of Drupal "hacks"
- Resources (internal and external)
- Size of data
- Design requested
- Functionality needed
- Growth plans
- Infrastructure analysis
- Determined a new site + migration
- Engaged and capable client

Requirement Sources

- Old site as a reference

- List of pain points to fix

- Vision and direction of new features

- Business growth plans

Complexity Everywhere

- Amount of data
- Business rules and workflow
- Content (amount & complexity)
- Many internal tools
- Automation of tasks
- Integration to external systems
- End user engagement

Plan It

- Dependency order of work

- Parallel development

- Resources needed

- Projected time and cost

- Task management

Business Process Design

- As-is process flow

- Defined existing metrics

- Identified improvements

- Designed the To-be process flow

- Architected tools to support process

Content Strategy

- Explored existing data

- Old-to-new data mappings

- Taxonomy overhaul

- Defined admin fields

- Tools to manage content

Content Enhancement

- Defined new content

- HUGE amount of new content

- Thousands of new pages

- Client embraced content

Evolution of scope

- Now a complete redesign
- Amount of content increased
- More content curating required
- More improvements on initial launch

Technical Design

- Best of breed module selection
- Vetted supporting libraries
- Evaluated external services
- Selected hosting vendor
- Migration approach

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Build It

- Aggressive parallel development
- Luxury user experience
- SEO powerhouse
- Custom analytics collection
- Application Integration

Populate It

- Hybrid migration + import + curation
- Migration was incremental
- It took quite some time for migration
- Content population during development

Testing

- Browser and device test
- Role based UAT
- Extensive SEO preparation
- Performance tuning
- Data integrity
- Business process testing

Go-live

- No room for rollback
- Right before their busy season
- Planning and practice
- Full team on staff
- Scheduled outage on a slow day

Ongoing improvements

- New features
- Data diet
- Performance tuning
- UI enhancements

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Lessons Learned

- Earlier on Pantheon
- More time for requirements definition / "discovery"
- More data analysis on old content
- Ah, Private Messages