

“The production side of our business could not function without MediaBank. MediaBank has allowed us to not only broaden the services we offer to our solicitor members, but also to expand into new industries as well.”

— Bill Scouller, GSPC Limited

Organization Profile

GSPC advertises homes for sale through solicitors in west central Scotland. GSPC is the single largest property marketing network in the area by far, and its 250+ member firms annually sell over 12,000 homes worth more than £1.2 billion. That is a sale every 15 minutes of every working day – including Saturdays. GSPC publishes a weekly Property Guide, the largest property supplement in Scotland with a circulation of 55,000 copies a week and literally thousands of homes for sale in every edition. The company also provides print on demand services for its members. Its search service ensures that buyers get details as soon as a home that meets their needs comes on the market, with over 4,500 buyers logged on to the service at any one time. GSPC also operates a call center that is open late nights and weekends to extend accessibility beyond normal working hours.

Founded 12 years ago, GSPC has 120 employees.

Business Challenge

Although the content that is the heart of GSPC’s services has a relatively short life, as more members began actively using the service, the number of images continued to grow and the process for managing those images was becoming increasingly unwieldy. In addition, GSPC believed it could offer members a number of innovative new services based on a more efficient content management solution. According to Bill Scouller of GSPC, “The original business driver was the need to create an organized repository for all of our images. But we were also looking to develop a solution to enable our members to manage and create marketing collateral online, and we needed a way to handle the image content for that marketing material as well. We process up to 25,000 images per week and we believed we could use those images in many other ways to the benefit our members.”

The Solution

GSPC chose MediaBank as its content management solution. Stirling says, "Part of the reason MediaBank was such a good fit for GSPC was its ability to integrate with Pageflex .EDIT, a solution we were proposing to GSPC for the creation of property schedules online by GSPC members to promote their listed properties. Both products were originally developed by the same company, so it was a natural fit."

Results

At any given time, GSPC has more than 250,000 assets under management. All assets are catalogued into MediaBank and made available via the web to members for use in managing their estate agency businesses, including an online photo album that makes it easy for members to upload and manage property photos. "We have established an upload form," says Scouller, "where users can check off all of the uses they require for each photo. Images are then uploaded to MediaBank and automatically converted to all of the necessary file formats for the designated uses. In addition, metadata is automatically applied to make search and retrieval of images and listings simple."

GSPC's print department can easily drag and drop images from the database into the QuarkXPress documents that make up the property supplement and other GSPC publications. And via the web, members can choose from a variety of property schedule templates and, using Pageflex .EDIT and MediaBank as the image repository, quickly and easily customize schedules to meet their individual needs. Options include simple double-sided A4 flyers as well

as booklets up to 16 pages and high-end gatefold brochures.

Scouller says, "WAVE wrote a Pageflex .EDIT plug-in to enable users to access images from MediaBank as part of the .EDIT session. The top half of the window displays .EDIT, and in the bottom half, they can programmatically search for images already in the right format in MediaBank. By clicking on the thumbnail of the image, the picture is automatically inserted into the picture box. It could not be easier for them to use and is a simple way to both proof and request printed copies."

In addition, MediaBank has allowed GSPC to increase the number of photos agents can use to promote a property. Scouller says, "In the past, due to system constraints, we limited agents to four or five images per property. Now they can upload as many as 20 or 30. There is no physical way we could deal with the number of images we now process without MediaBank. Its automation allows us to catalog more than 25,000 images per week."

The return on investment for GSPC has been incredible."

— Bill Scouller, GSPC Limited

While GSPC specializes in the estate agency business, the firm has found that its innovative solution is applicable to a number of other industries as well, including commercial users, motor dealers, hotels, and financial services firms. Stirling adds, "We also have a fairly large food manufacturer in the UK who uses MediaBank as a straightforward digital asset management system to manage logos, images and other files. We also use MediaBank as the content management element in our variable data printing projects for a variety of clients." ♦

