



Managing successful delivery of a truly first-class digital presence for the QHotels portfolio

Acquired by Apriose Real Estate Investment in September 2017, the QHotels collection encompasses 21 unique UK hotels, championship golf courses and luxury spas.

Central to the commercial strategy was development of a website able to provide the primary channel for booked revenues. The final site architecture encompassed a main group website and 21 microsites. Each needed to match the high standard of the properties and offer a consistent, quality customer experience across multiple hotel services.

It's clear that the Cogent Blue team's knowledge and professional understanding contributed to the smooth transition of each site, showing it's more than just the generic project-management that counts. There were times I was unsure the programme would complete...it did so on time and on budget. Bringing together such a diverse team of specialists, opinions and re-sourcing issues, Cogent Blue meticulously brought this project over the line in an impressive way.

Kym Kapadia, Chief Commercial Officer – Hotels,
Apriose Real Estate Investment

apriose real estate investment

Client

Apriose

Industry:

Real Estate Investment

Turnover:

£190m (QHotels portfolio)

Size:

2940 rooms
21 hotels
(16 QHotels;
5 Doubletree by Hilton)
195 meeting rooms
8 golf courses
19 spas

Description

Founded in 1987, Apriose is an FCA licensed real estate investment platform based in London. 100% dedicated to direct real estate investment, primarily in the UK, the highly experienced and multi-disciplinary team manage all aspects of the transaction process including selective deal sourcing, carefully crafted risk-mitigated structures, execution and asset management.

The business challenge

With the website such a central strand of revenue delivery, and with an existing site deemed unfit for purpose, delivering a new digital presence swiftly and correctly was a commercial necessity.

The new site architecture had to provide for a range of individual hotels and variety of services, targeting

different audiences as well as allowing tailored campaign activity.

Phase 1 of the development project entailed selection of a digital agency, 80DAYS. Alongside the owners, Apriose Real Estate Investment, and the hotel management companies who changed during the project, this made for a complex multi-stakeholder framework.

- Website unfit for purpose
- Commercially critical
- Flexibility required across hotels, services and campaigns
- Complex multi-stakeholder framework

Our 360° solution

To roll-out a business-critical website on time, and right-first-time, it became apparent that specialist project management support was required. Apriose engaged Cogent Blue to manage the site development and deployment through the appointed digital agency.

- Fresh, flexible and functional site architecture
- Intuitive, user-focussed experience
- Consistent look, feel and tone
- Internal training
- Delivered on time within tight timeframes

Following a gate stage process a robust scope was developed and a flexible platform identified, built and populated to successfully meet the needs of both the business and the user experience.

The initial discovery phase formed a picture of the audience; what they were looking for and competitor benchmarks they would be exposed to. This shaped the overall structure and function of the site.

To create an intuitive user experience site architecture was constructed around directory style group pages, underpinned with a micro-site strategy. This, alongside defined business requirements, enabled user focused features to facilitate fast search and comparison of the entire portfolio,

whilst supporting customisable landing pages for each hotel. Use of the microsites allowed:

- Hotels to be easily added and managed; presenting each as individual, conveying their own character and unique selling points with opportunity to use vanity sites for tactical local marketing.
- Flexibility to target audience needs. Presenting either hotels, spas and golf courses, by events such as weddings, conferences and meetings, or by offers and other campaigns.

A 'mobile first' design approach was supported by the choice of responsive Content Management System (CMS), Umbraco 7.

Creation of design guidelines and use of bespoke CMS templates allowed an ownable style to be applied consistently across pages, including a reskinned booking engine.

To maintain messaging and tone all site copy was edited and rewritten.

Decoupling from the old site maintained SEO, with new set-up tags and tools offering improvement for the future.

The sandbox site was moved to a new server, populated with go-live content and UX tested to verify user journeys pre-launch in March 2019.

Training sessions helped empower internal teams to continue consistent style, tone and positive momentum of the site post-launch.

Cogent Blue's efficient, professional and slick management of the recent website roll-out programme exceeded expectations from the outset. In the face of repeated challenges, the team stayed calm, levelled, and incredibly tolerant throughout the whole process. It's without any hesitation I'd welcome working with Cogent Blue again soon.

Kym Kapadia, Chief Commercial Officer – Hotels,
Apriose Real Estate Investment

To find a 360° solution for your business, get in touch:

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