Case Study: Responsive Website Design Adds Value to the School Community

Hebrew Academy (Rabbi Alexander S. Gross)

Customer Profile

Established: 1947

City / State:
Miami Beach, FL

Grades: Infant - Grade 12

Enrollment: 560

School Type:
Private, Modern
Orthodox Jewish

Implemented: 2016

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- Dr. Ami Eskanos
Dean of Admission

The Challenge

As the oldest Modern Orthodox Jewish Day School south of Baltimore, MD, the Hebrew Academy is committed to engaging in its community and to holding itself to a higher standard. Offering a comprehensive, holistic program of education that combines Hebrew, Judaic and college preparatory programs, the school prepares its students for success.

To embrace this vision, the Hebrew Academy sought to address the needs of its school community and provide them with the tools for success in the 21st century. They also began the process of updating their school brand and website. But to evolve, they needed an innovative and affordable technology solution.

Creating a new logo to replace the outdated one that had branded the school for the past five years was the first order of business. They needed a fresh, vibrant, youthful design that stood for their continued excellence in secular education and Torah learning.

School Website:
www.hebrewacademymiami.org

Solution:
RediSite Responsive Website Design and Hosting

Benefits:
- An affordable, professional website that is easy to maintain, edit and customize.
- The ability to engage with the school community, adding value as it allows users to post, share and comment.
- Integration with Rediker's PlusPortals, Admissions and Online Applications

Second, they examined their timeworn, stagnant website and concluded that it, too, needed an upgrade. Not only was it unresponsive, it didn't offer key features valuable for school personnel, parents and prospective parents. Essentially, it was missing the fundamental elements and mobile-ready features required to compete in today's digitally-driven world.

"We began thinking about our new website and branding during the 2015-16 school year," said Sandy Bernstein, School Software Administrator / 21st Century Learning Specialist and Webmaster. Hebrew Academy's Review Committee, spearheaded by Bernstein and Dean of Admission Dr. Ami Eskanos, took the task of updating their website very seriously. They exercised tremendous caution and took the time to investigate numerous options.

"Our Review Committee was looking for a website that was easy to maintain, easy to navigate, and offered easy one-stop access to our parent web portal and upcoming events," Bernstein explained. "We wanted up-to-date news and social feeds, easy donation buttons, and last, but not least, an affordable, yet professional-looking website," she said.

The Solution

Finding the right company to design a responsive website required an exhaustive search and funding approval. The Review Committee knew that a strong responsive design makes a school's website scale comfortably on any device and in turn, sticking with a strong website means less need to hire expensive specialists. After considering many other website vendors and designs, they zeroed in on several specific elements; the new site should accurately reflect their new branding, it should be comprised of social media components combining engaging photos and graphics, and it should be able to link directly to their parent portals.

While there were many responsive website companies on the market, Rediker's RediSite features stood out. The affordable price tag also caught the Committee's attention and RediSite soon became a frontrunner in their website choices.

"Rediker rose to the top as a standout choice for us," said Eskanos. "They had already created hundreds of websites specifically for schools, provided an affordable package, and offered an extremely user-friendly approach to website maintenance." Added Bernstein, "We felt that other website options would still require a webmaster, were not as flexible, and were costlier. Plus, the competition had a 'common' look, that was not as unique and vibrant as Rediker's responsive website designs."

The Results

After numerous discussions with Rediker and its website developers, the Review Committee finalized its plans to adopt RediSite in September 2016. Because the cost to move to Rediker's responsive website was affordable, Hebrew Academy could choose from a variety of website styles and customize it to match the school's new branding.

Rediker
SOFTWARE

While a website's first impression relies heavily on design, what it has to say matters, too. It needs to be able to hold a conversation, and sell value. That's what the Hebrew Academy's new RediSite website delivers. The website caters to the school community, adding value as it allows users to post, share, comment, and engage with other users.

Site-wide alerts notify visitors immediately of important information, a news bar features the latest information from the school, and with one click sign-in, the integration with Rediker's PlusPortals helps connect people who are already part of the Hebrew Academy community through file sharing, media galleries, calendars and a digital gradebook.

Key landing pages, like the Admissions page, also capture a visitor's attention with student profiles, how-to steps, and call-to-action buttons that integrate seamlessly into the layout and design. For prospective parents, it also contains a wealth of information in a user-friendly format with a direct link to Rediker's Online Applications.

"As the Dean of Admission, I believe the website is a significant asset for student recruitment and enrollment retention," Eskanos explained. "Our current families are excited to have a website that reflects the true nature of our school, and potential families have asked if our school is really as fantastic as our website makes it seem… which of course it is!"

From a web maintenance viewpoint, the webpages are easy to update and maintain. They no longer need a webmaster to maintain the website. "We no longer need to depend on a webmaster (myself) to make revisions," Bernstein noted. "In fact, our Division principals take pride in maintaining their own pages!"

They are also already looking to expand to eventually incorporate Rediker's new eCommerce feature. This will allow the Hebrew Academy to sell its school merchandise on their website and includes tax configuration, shipping, payment types, product options, discount codes, and more.

"We are constantly thinking of ways to evolve and that begins with how we present ourselves," said Head of School Rabbi Zvi Kahn. "Our new website and logo reflect our commitment to our community to be engaged and hold ourselves up to a higher standard."

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> **Rabbi Zvi Kahn**
> Head of School

Visit Hebrew Academy's New Website:
www.hebrewacademymiami.org

For more information about Rediker Software, visit

www.rediker.com

More About Hebrew Academy

Hebrew Academy is an inclusive Modern Orthodox school that emphasizes excellence in both Judaic and General Studies and strives to instill in their students a deep love for the Land and State of Israel, and for their brothers and sisters who reside there. Since 1947, Hebrew Academy's mission has been to inspire their students to use the knowledge and values they acquire at the academy to become proud, upstanding members of society and leaders in both the Jewish community and the community at large.

Hebrew Academy's students, who range in age from six weeks through grade 12, hail from all over the world. The population is comprised of Modern Orthodox and Orthodox families seeking academic rigor and traditional Torah values and practice.

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