Synoptek

Case Study

Great Parks of Hamilton County Modernizes Guest Experience with a Kentico DXP Foundation

Customer Overview

Customer

Great Parks of Hamilton County

Profile

Great Parks preserves and protects natural resources while providing outdoor recreation, conservation, and educational experiences for the Greater Cincinnati community. It offers a diverse range of services, including golf, camping reservations, retail and e-commerce, entertainment and ticketing, as well as education and community programming.

Industry

Government / Parks & Recreation

Services

CX Discovery, Research & Insights, Future-state Journey Mapping, UX & Creative Design, Xperience by Kentico Strategy & Implementation, and Program & Change Management

A CX-led program connecting web, POS, and ticketing to improve mobile journeys and make calendars, reservations, and memberships easier.

Business Need

Great Parks operated a patchwork of on-premises and off-the-shelf systems, including web, mobile web, Point of Sale (POS), and ticketing, that didn't effectively capture or share data. The lack of cross-platform integration limited guest insight, hindered staff collaboration, and created friction in the online experience.

Guests struggled to find programs, reserve facilities, or access consistent event information.

"Our website is two miles wide and an inch deep."

"Our mobile experience is not good."

"When I'm looking at paddling information, I should see all paddling programs, events, and opportunities."

— Stakeholder insights, Great Parks of Hamilton County

To overcome these challenges, the leadership sought to build a mobile-first website to unify content, improve findability (especially calendars and programs), and prepare for integration with POS and reservations systems guided by a CX-led modernization program.

Solution and Approach

Synoptek led a comprehensive, CX-driven modernization initiative, combining research, strategy, and implementation to establish a scalable digital foundation.

The engagement followed Synoptek's discovery-to-delivery methodology, aligning leadership, marketing, and IT around a unified digital vision.

Discovery & Strategy

Synoptek's Customer Experience (CX) and Digital Experience Platform (DXP) teams conducted a complete digital discovery program that included:

- Employee, department, and executive interviews to uncover pain points across departments (operations, education, marketing).
- UX/UI audits and content analysis to identify navigation complexity and mobile drop-offs.
- Customer interviews and surveys to understand customer wants and needs.
- Future-state journey mapping workshops to define the desired guest experience.
- Analytics benchmarking to establish measurable KPIs for engagement, conversion, and adoption.

These efforts resulted in a data-driven digital roadmap that prioritized content findability, event booking, integration readiness, and ease of operations, with simplified page creation achieved by leveraging a library of components and reusable content.

Platform Selection

After evaluating multiple DXPs, Xperience by Kentico was selected for its comprehensive capabilities, modular architecture, intuitive user interface, and low total cost of ownership. Here's why Xperience by Kentico stood out:

- **Unified Digital Experience Platform**
  Deliver content, marketing, and commerce from one powerful, all-in-one DXP
- **Built for Growth-Minded Mid-Market Enterprises**
  Enterprise-grade performance without the enterprise price tag.
- **Microsoft-Native and Cloud-Ready**
  Hosted on Microsoft Azure, with out-of-the-box integrations for Azure Search, Translate, and Dynamics 365.
- **Secure, Scalable, and Compliant**
  Built on .NET Core, Xperience provides top-tier performance, ISO 27001 & SOC2 compliance, and full WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility support.
- **Suitable for Marketers and IT**
  AI-powered personalization, workflow automation, and intuitive content management empower teams to take control.

Implementation & Enablement

Synoptek's implementation focused on building a mobile-first, accessible, and SEO-optimized Digital Experience Platform leveraging Xperience by Kentico.

The solution emphasized ease of navigation, improved calendar visibility, and content modularity, ensuring consistent experiences across devices.

Synoptek updated the design, leveraging the Great Parks branding to introduce a modernized look and feel with rich imagery, new fonts, icons, and illustrations. A component-based design system was established to enable content reuse and accelerate approvals and publishing cycles. We also enhanced the site search engine to improve content findability.

Additionally, we conducted a large-scale content migration, transferring thousands of content types from the old site to the new one using structured content mapping and migration tools. We enabled smooth booking and event management through integrations with their legacy reservation and events systems.

Synoptek also developed a content governance framework, defining authoring roles and workflows to maintain content integrity across departments.

Phased Digital Transformation Roadmap

To enable Great Parks' vision for a connected and seamless visitor experience, Synoptek designed a phased transformation roadmap. The program strategically sequences key initiatives to modernize digital engagement, streamline operations, and deliver measurable business outcomes, moving from foundational web modernization to integrated commerce and data-driven decision-making.

Program Sequencing Roadmap:

1. Web site launch, powered by Xperience by Kentico, and POS integration with a leading recreation management SaaS tool
2. Reservation System integration with the recreation management tool
3. Data & Insights enablement

Great Parks Digital Transformation Roadmap

DXP Implementation	POS Implementation	Reservations & Ticketing
1H 2025	Q4 2025	2026
Kentico DXP launch, UX modernization, staff training	Modern POS integrated with ERP/eCommerce	New booking/ticketing system, scalable & integrated

Baseline Insights (Pre-Modernization)

Synoptek's analytics audit revealed key behavioral patterns that shaped design priorities:

- 77% of sessions were on mobile, validating the need for a mobile-first approach.
- Mobile users averaged 1.6 pages/session vs. 2.3 on desktop, highlighting navigation friction.
- 26K calendar visits in just 5 weeks
- 78K sessions from 54K users (~26% returning), showing strong loyalty and engagement.

These insights directly informed UX improvements and measurement benchmarks for post-launch success.

Results

The CX-led program led to several benefits for Great Parks:

Quantitative Outcomes

- Defined nine journey maps to shape the future digital experience.
- Reduced platform complexity by 60%.
- Assessed 20+ software solutions to identify the right technology fit.
- Mobile-first redesign increased accessibility and engagement.
- Improved navigation reduced friction and improved time-on-site.
- Streamlined content workflows reduced update time from days to hours.
- Integration-ready architecture established the foundation for POS and reservations.

Qualitative Impact

- Enabled real-time event management for classes and programs.
- Set up capability for future automated email marketing. Greater visibility into user behavior with built-in analytics dashboards.
- Stronger community engagement through optimized digital touchpoints.

> When guests can plan and explore digitally with ease, their connection to our parks deepens. That's the real win.
>
> **– Digital Strategy Stakeholder, Great Parks of Hamilton County**

Plan your Kentico roadmap workshop with Synoptek to explore how a composable, CX-led DXP strategy can modernize your organization's digital experience and accelerate transformation.

About Synoptek

Synoptek delivers accelerated business results through advisory-led, transformative full-life-cycle systems integration and managed services. We partner with organizations worldwide to help them navigate the ever-changing business and technology landscape, build solid foundations for their business, and achieve their business goals.