

CHICAGO AREA RUNNERS ASSOCIATION (CARA)

USER-DRIVEN INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE AND A NEW PUBLISHING APPROACH HELP CARA REVITALIZE ITS INTERNET PRESENCE.

As a market leader and one of the country's largest running associations, CARA expects its Internet presence to reflect the value it provides to its members. Working with West Monroe Partners, it reorganized content according to users' needs, updated its site design, and implemented a new content management system—all in a matter of just four months.

CHICAGO AREA RUNNERS ASSOCIATION.

The Chicago Area Runners Association (CARA) is a non-profit organization devoted to expanding, motivating, supporting and celebrating the running community of Chicagoland. CARA connects runners to resources that enable them to run—further, faster, better, for life. With more than 8,000 members, CARA is the largest running organization in the Midwest United States and the third largest in the nation.

DELIVERING VALUE TO MEMBERS AND SPONSORS.

As a market leader and one of the country's largest running associations, CARA expects its Internet presence to reflect the value it provides to its members. Consequently, it initiated a project to ensure that:

- ◆ Its users—including runners, vendors, race managers, volunteers, and sponsors—could find information easily
- ◆ Its staff could publish key information—such as running calendars and race results—in a timely manner
- ◆ Its sponsors could understand the extent to which visitors were viewing their information

Most importantly, CARA wanted its site to highlight the communal, competitive, and health benefits of running.

For assistance in revitalizing its web presence, CARA turned to West Monroe Partners. West Monroe Partners offered experience with information architecture and user experience design, as well as capabilities for implementing content management solutions.

A USER-DRIVEN APPROACH.

One of the project's key challenges was organizing a large amount of information in a way that was easy for the site's diverse audiences to find it. Applying information architecture best practices, the West Monroe Partners project team created an approach that categorizes site content from a user's perspective rather than a content owner's perspective.

Then, the team applied user-experience design principles to effectively convey CARA's mission as a not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization that promotes running in the Chicago area. This included enhancing visibility of volunteer opportunities, events, and sponsor information.

Finally, the project team worked with CARA to select and implement the SiteCore content management system. Previously, CARA's staff submitted content updates to a third-party vendor—a process that often delayed publishing of time-sensitive information such as race results. SiteCore provided significant functionality at a reasonable cost. In addition, West Monroe Partners' extensive product experience enabled it to create several custom add-ons, including capabilities for publishing race results and maintaining an events calendar.

The new site—www.cararuns.org—has received very positive feedback from CARA staff and visitors, alike. The organization's new ability to make immediate content updates has made the site easier and faster to manage—with the ultimate benefit being a site that delivers value to CARA's sponsors and members.

- West Monroe Partners is an international, full-service business and technology consulting firm focused on guiding organizations through projects that fundamentally transform their business. With the experience to create the most ambitious visions as well as the skills to implement the smallest details of our clients' most critical projects, West Monroe Partners is a proven provider of growth and efficiency to large enterprises, as well as more nimble middle-market organizations. Our more than 300 consulting professionals drive better business results by harnessing our collective experience across a range of industries, serving clients out of offices across the United States and Canada.