A site for sore eyes

How PURE Spa & Beauty took lead from their salons and brought a sense of luxury to their online experience.

PURE
Spa & Beauty

L E W I S

L

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURE Spa & Beauty's philosophy is simple: to combine essential spa and beauty treatments for time-starved individuals. Open late throughout the week in urban locations, their expert therapists are there for busy working clients, even after their longest days.

In 2014, however, the brand was facing a major issue. Their time-starved clientele were increasingly turning to the PURE website in order to familiarise themselves with salons, check out treatments and book appointments. But, in order to get the treatment that they so richly deserved, these customers had to challenge their patience against a poorly designed and badly structured website that, ironically, increased their stress levels at every stage of the booking process. The site was proving to be an assault course for online customers and was affecting business and brand perception.

The team at PURE recognised that they needed to improve their digital offering and ensure that the website painted a more positive picture of what their salons could offer. Together, we developed an online journey that reinvigorated the business and proved that beauty is a powerful tool – even when it comes to digital credentials!

"The digital landscape has grown hugely since we opened our first salon 13 years ago and, as a result, so has the buying behaviour and expectations of our customers. Over the years, we had applied various temporary fixes to our website and it was doing a surprisingly good job for us under the circumstances! However, we knew that wouldn't last forever and that it was time to invest in a more structured approach to our online business. The success that we have seen since the launch of the new website is quite incredible – it just goes to show how valuable a good online approach to sales and customer services is."

Becky Woodhouse
CEO, PURE Spa & Beauty

L

THE CHALLENGE
....

PURE Spa & Beauty was established in Edinburgh in 2002, after its creators noticed a gap in the beauty market to cater specifically for urban professionals.
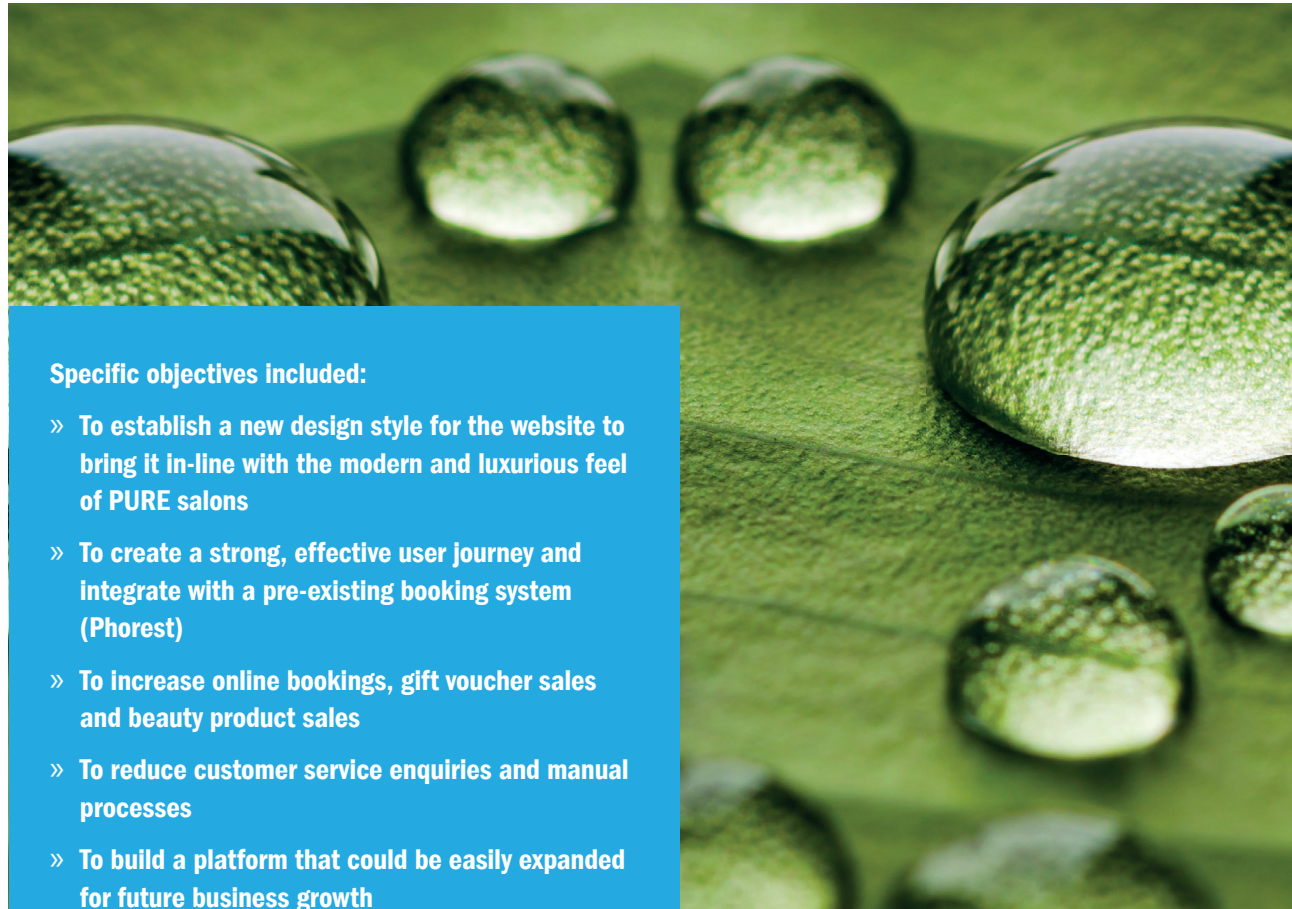
Since then the business has grown rapidly and now includes five Scottish city salons, with ambitions to develop even further across the UK. Obviously, good looks were important to the brand but, in a fiercely competitive landscape, the technical and commercial goals could not be overlooked.

So, our challenge was to build a market-leading ecommerce store that was a pleasure to use and, importantly, that would help to generate more business and increase profitability.

Specific objectives included:

» **To establish a new design style for the website to bring it in-line with the modern and luxurious feel of PURE salons**

» **To create a strong, effective user journey and integrate with a pre-existing booking system (Phorest)**

» **To increase online bookings, gift voucher sales and beauty product sales**

» **To reduce customer service enquiries and manual processes**

» **To build a platform that could be easily expanded for future business growth**

» **To cater for a rapidly moving digital audience (desktop, mobile and tablet users)**

» **To help the turnover of the business to reach £1.1m (an 80% increase)**

» **To keep within a tight budget for all planning, design, build and technical integration (£30k).**

**This wasn't a case of just putting on a pretty face, it had to be an all-encompassing makeover!**

THE CHALLENGE

Part of the philosophy of the PURE brand is to improve the health, happiness and well-being of their customers. We realised that to achieve this it was vital that every touch-point with the brand had a calm and positive quality. It was essential that customers be taken on a seamless journey, no matter what their starting point - online, offline or in-store.

Although the design of the existing site wasn't terrible, the lack of a coherent design strategy and consistency of style was affecting the overall visual identity, cheapening the brand and making a seamless journey impossible.
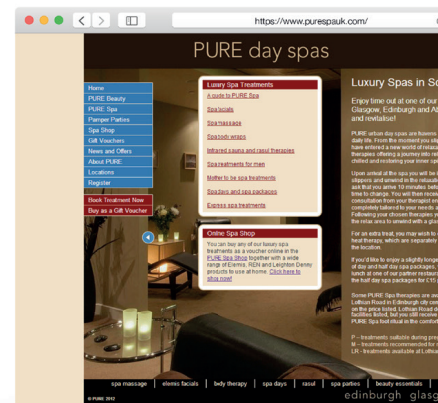
The inconsistent styles of the previous website.

Marketing Society Star Awards 2015

Sector Category: 4.6 Retail

www.purespauk.com
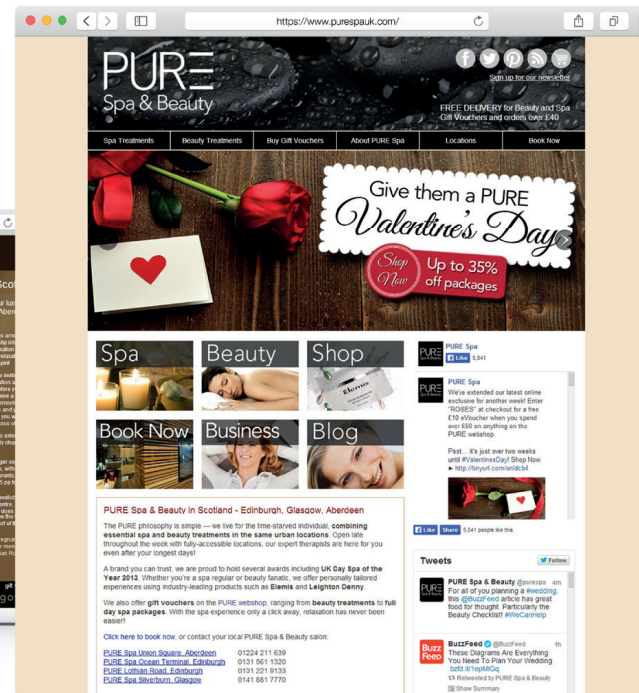
DESIGN STRATEGY

....

Our starting point for design was to carry out analysis to accurately position the current website.

The results showed that the site appeared rather clinical and unrefined compared to competitors. We felt that it could benefit from an injection of warmth to enhance the friendly, professional and bespoke nature of the PURE offering. Our aim for the renewed web presence was to reposition the brand online and heighten its sense of luxury, expertise and personality.

Project PURE proposition:

Create a unified brand journey across all communication material and contact points. The customer journey online should maintain the same sense of luxury as the PURE in-spa experience.

1. Branding

The current use of the logo type was inconsistent and often positioned close to the edge of its bounding box, which made it look uncomfortable. We increased the size of the exclusion zone giving it more space to breathe and instantly generating a premium feel.

Before

After

DESIGN STRATEGY

··

2. Colour

Our initial instinct was to design the site with a light and airy feel, using white backgrounds and clean lines to represent a feeling of space and freedom. However, after being invited to try out the spa facilities for ourselves (it's a hard job!), we realised that the environment at PURE was warm and inviting – like the hug you long for at the end of a long day's work! The colour schemes and interiors of the salons comprise of dark tones, far from the harsh clinical look that the majority of their competitors favour. We felt it important that this comforting mood carried over onto the website.

The final visuals incorporated a palette of soft greys as a continuation of the physical environment. This also allows the photography and campaign materials to shine and not fight for attention against a pronounced colour palette.

DESIGN STRATEGY

3. Typography

There were no existing guidelines for the use of typography in the previous site and the inconsistencies were perhaps more evident than ever in this area. In a way, this was an easy one to fix! We unified the typography by using Avenir, a friendly yet professional sans serif. A clear typographical hierarchy laid the foundations for a complimentary strategy in campaign work.

The use of typography in the previous site was adding to a sense of disorder and looked unprofessional.
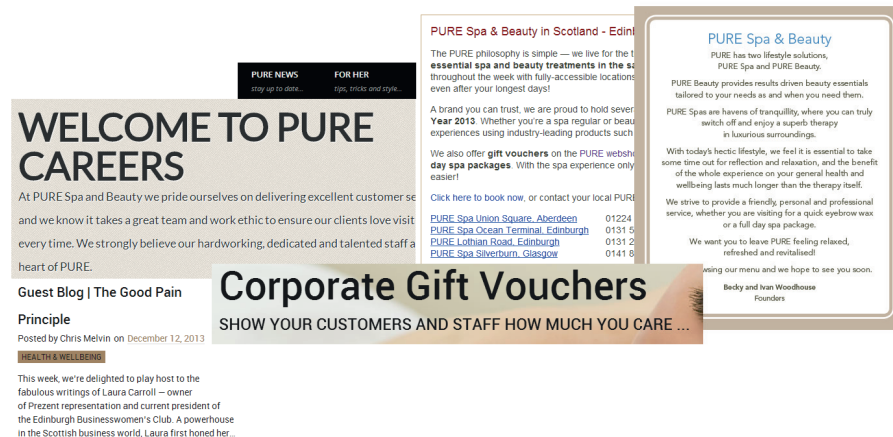
Styleguide h1

Styleguide h2

Subheadline

Subheadline Weighted

Avenir Medium is used for pullout text to create more emphasis in the normal paragraph. Great for introduction copy and smart highlighting.

Normal body copy is set in Avenir 35 Light at 16px/24 and slightly tighter tracked at -10. This makes it legible and friendly while still being elegant.

Clear rules and a simplified style helped to refine the brand online.

L

DESIGN STRATEGY

4. Photography

A new image style was developed to help visually unify the brand whilst keeping enough diversity to accommodate future needs and campaign styles. We knew that ongoing budget would be restricted so we had to be pragmatic, consider that future images would be sourced by the client and allow for stock photography without being clichéd. The strategy was based on three image categories:
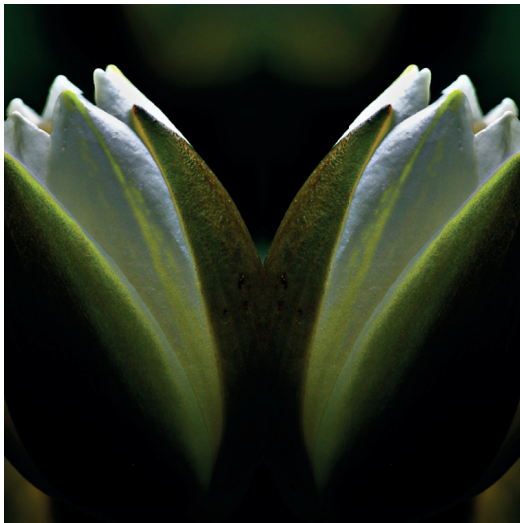
Textural and natural

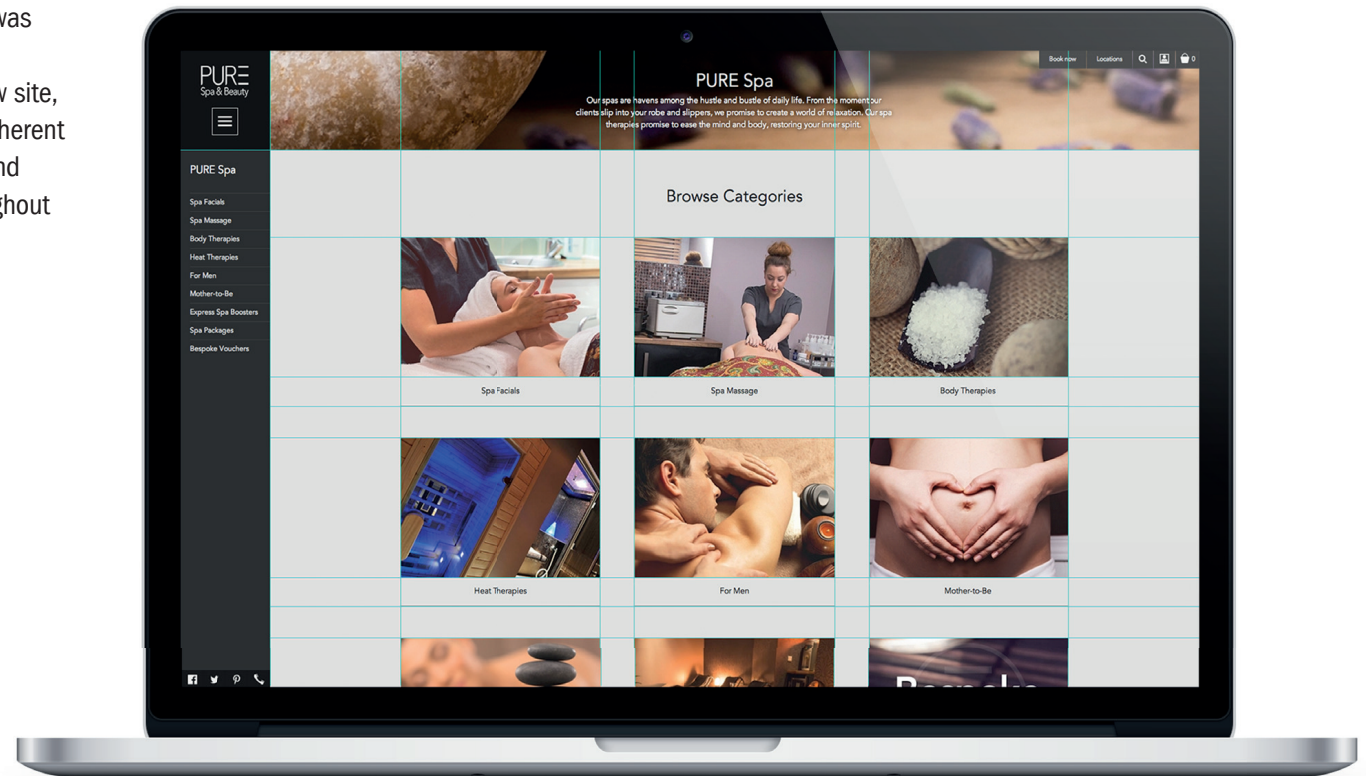Spa locations featuring people

Campaign driven

DESIGN STRATEGY

···

5. User experience

A big problem with the current site was a lack of content order. We carefully planned out the hierarchy of the new site, UI/UX priorities and developed a coherent grid system to rationalise content and achieve consistency of layout throughout the user journey.

A defined grid provided the best solution in terms of a structured layout and options for responsiveness across devices.

L

DESIGN STRATEGY

5. User experience

For the first time ever, in response to analytics showing that the majority of traffic to the site came from tablet users, we designed the site with a tablet-first approach. Ordinarily, the design process begins with desktop-first or, as has been the trend in recent years, mobile-first.

It was a challenge for everyone involved but proved massively successful. The design team worked with the front-end build and technical development teams from day 1 to ensure that the creative solution would easily translate through the full process.
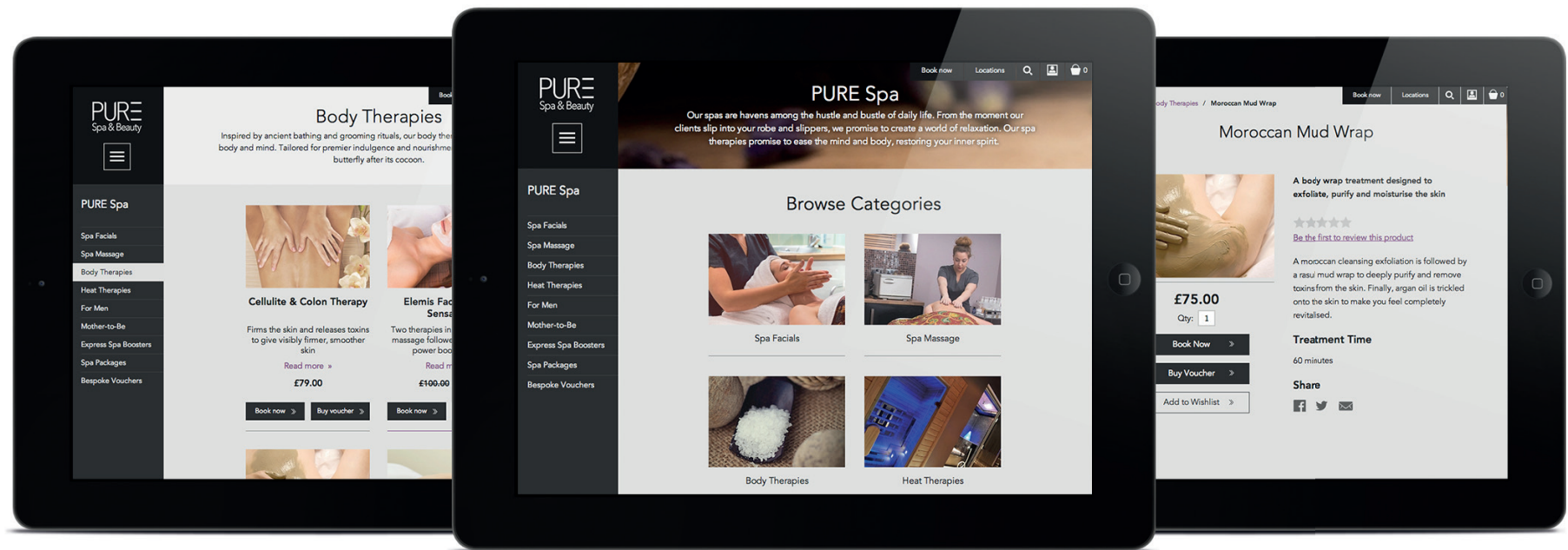
DESIGN STRATEGY

5. User experience

The site was designed fully responsively so that the grid would adapt to the size of any browser/device and make the most of the space available under any circumstance.

L
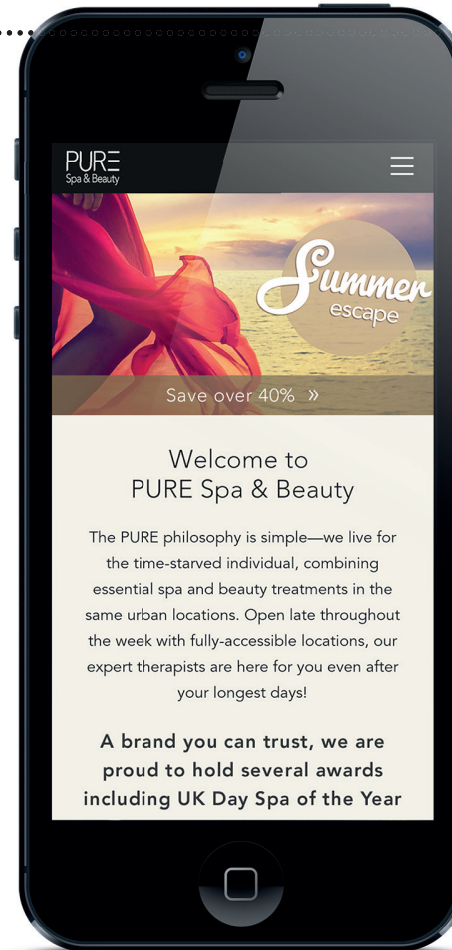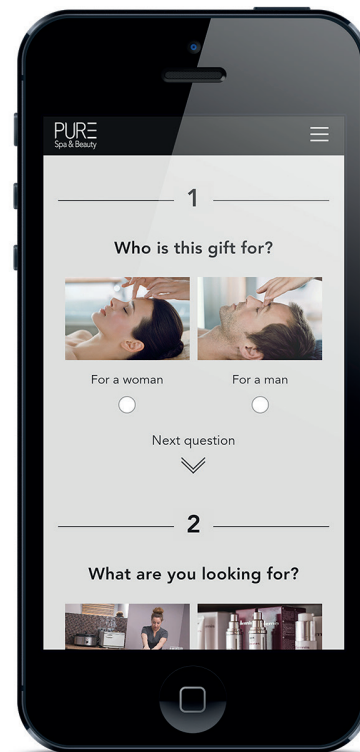
TECHNICAL SOLUTION

The technical objectives of the project were creative ones too: we had to build a market-leading ecommerce site that was a pleasure to use.

It was a challenge, especially as we had to achieve this whilst juggling functionality across 3 different platforms, all of which had varying levels of customisation and integrated in different ways:

» The website Content Management System (CMS)

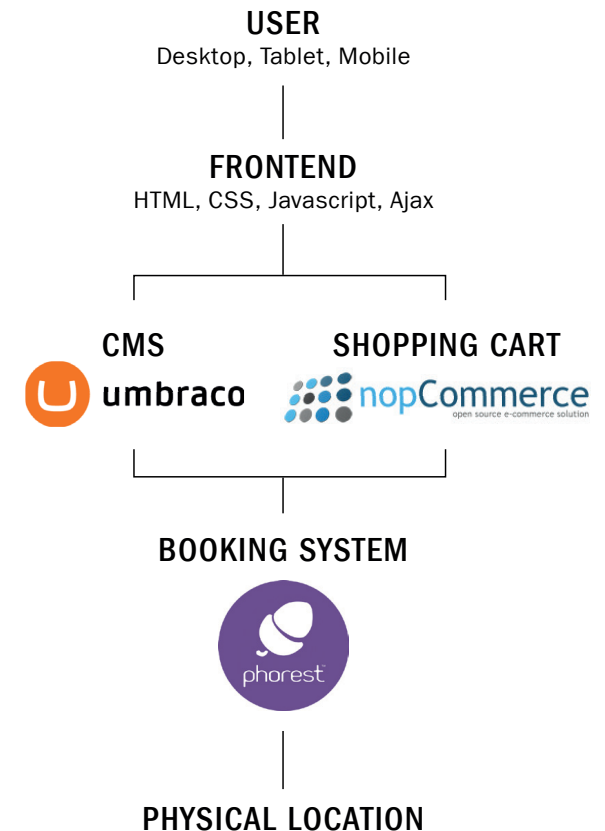» The existing booking system (Phorest)

» The ecommerce system.

Initially we researched several ecommerce systems including Magento and Shopify to find the best fit for PURE, but finally settled on nopCommerce. Because nopCommerce is an open source system, it allowed us the flexibility to modify and add certain elements that don't come 'out of the box' (including custom banners, thumbnails, product descriptions, discounting rules and booking integration) to meet the exact specification of the brief.

We chose Umbraco CMS as it offered a good level of integration and would allow for a solid, sustainable and user-friendly solution for ongoing web administration and updates.

One of the biggest technical challenges was achieving consistency of the user journey, despite all of the different systems that were being used. The technical team coded the site, using ajax calls to communicate and share data between the backend systems, so that, as far as the customer is concerned, their experience is completely harmonious and uninterrupted. Building this intelligent cross-platform solution had an added benefit that the team at PURE never had to update the same thing in two places. Two birds with one stone!

"As one of PURE Spa & Beauty's regulars, I find the new website really represents what they achieve in their spas. With the ability to buy gift vouchers, retail products and book online, the only thing you cannot do online is actually experience a treatment!"

Laura Carroll
Customer & Businesswoman

USER
Desktop, Tablet, Mobile

FRONTEND
HTML, CSS, Javascript, Ajax

CMS
umbraco

SHOPPING CART
nopCommerce
open source e-commerce solution

BOOKING SYSTEM
phorest

PHYSICAL LOCATION

L

THE RESULTS

The brand new PURE Spa & Beauty website looks incredible. The digital landscape of the brand now fully lives up to the premium, luxury feel of its city salons and sits consistently in the overall customer journey from research, to booking, to appointment. The site works seamlessly across desktop, mobile and tablet platforms and caters for an ever increasing and intelligent online audience.

Over and above the physical and technological improvements, in just 5 months from launch, the site has had a massive impact on the success of the business. Its impact will undoubtedly help towards meeting the increased business turnover objectives. Comparing results from January 2014 with January 2015 the achievements have been extraordinary and have exceeded even the most optimistic of forecasts:

» Online bookings have jumped from 360 to 1,016 per month (+182%)

» Income from treatments booked online has grown from just over £12k per month to just over £30k (+150%)

» The proportion of customers being referred from the website has increased from 16% to 58%

» Online sales (products and gift vouchers) now account for 23% of all retail sales. Previously this figure sat around 4.5%.

» Telephone enquiries and manual customer service requests have fallen by at least 40%.

PURE is a brand that now embodies its vision, intent and beauty credentials online, showing that it's possible to combine good looks and technology with stunning results!

"Synthesising two Content Management Systems and a third-party booking system would be a challenge for any team but we are confident that, together, we have achieved this and much more. Part menu, part ecommerce, part creative indulgence our new website truly sets us apart from our competitors. It has allowed our brand to fully modernise, giving us new sales avenues and providing us with a site from which traffic, ROI and client feedback continues to grow positively."

Amanda Wrathall
Group Sales & Marketing Manager