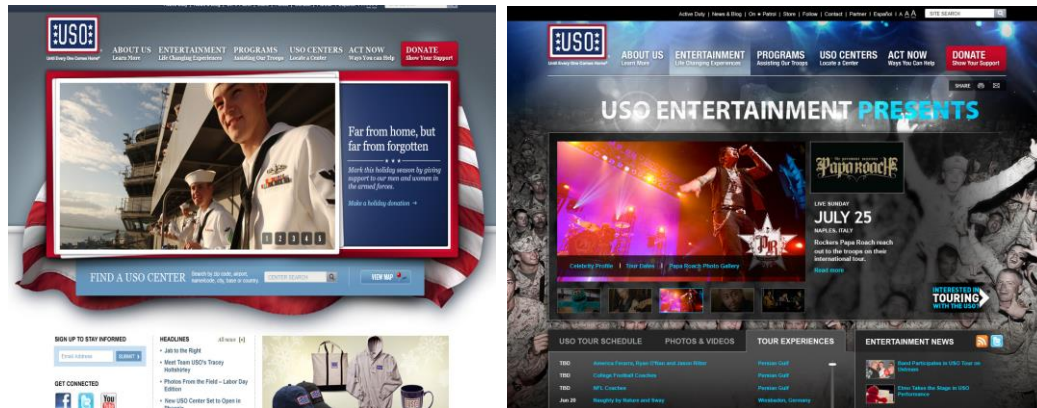


## COMPELLING, ENGAGING AND EMOTIONAL

*A Completely Reworked Website, Strategy and CMS for the USO*



### Situation

Caught in the Web's owner was tasked with leading a complete redesign of the USO website as the Director of Web Operations. This iconic organization underwent a complete overhaul of its website, charged with becoming a resource for troops and their families, a dynamic lure for entertainers, an inspiration to donors, a salute to corporate partners, a connection with the media and a compelling place for Americans to engage with the USO's mission

The effort included extensive discovery sessions with stakeholders, site and content strategy, creative strategy, and design and development of the site, including a custom donation platform. The USO wanted an online presence for the troops, families and constituents while providing the infrastructure for online fundraising.

A few of the goals for the new site were to:

- Update the brand tone, style and manner to create a more contemporary online presence
- Create a visually pleasing website that touches the emotions of multiple visitors and captivates them to explore and learn more about the services delivered to the troops by the USO
- Serve as a destination portal for active military and their families for information about USO services
- Create a flexible donation platform

- Create an entertainment destination that showcases the life-changing experiences for the troops, their families and the entertainers who go on tour
- Provide the USO with the tools to manage day-to-day updates of their site

## **Solution**

Working with key stakeholders and through focus groups with troops, families, volunteers and donors, LaPrade developed a strategy to improve usability and add richer, deeper content to the site to increase daily traffic and user engagement.

Launched in 2010, the content for the site was written by LaPrade and support by the USO's former PR partner, Williams Whittle. LaPrade also led a robust content audit of over 6,000 web pages from the previous USO.org. The site was built for easy maintenance and quick updates of fresh content by USO staff. Today, the website is an inviting, engaging space for troops, families and other visitors to share and tell their USO story. The site is a destination to show support for the troops with monetary donations as well as through various *Walls of Thanks* to leave personal messages for service men and women. The site includes streamlined search and more intuitive navigation, a high energy entertainment section, locate-a-center functionality, advanced social media integration, a custom platform for creation and testing of customizable fundraising campaigns and an ecommerce store to purchase USO merchandise.

## **Results**

The new site provides the platform for the USO to increase fundraising dollars by driving donors from external email and interactive campaigns. Through the new site, the USO was able to manage a highly-successful 4<sup>th</sup> of July "We've Got Your Back" premium campaign. The flexibility of the new site led to \$240,000 in donations for this premium-based initiative. The USO nearly doubled its end of year/holiday giving season fundraising totals to \$2.4 million dollars in three months after the launch of the site. Traffic to uso.org increased 40% within the first six months after launch due largely to the new SEO and copywriting focus, as well as launch campaign efforts to bring awareness to the new site.

The site not only features services and information about the USO, but provides the destination for other interactive programs such as *Thanks From Everywhere*, an interactive map that hosts 50,000 personalized messages to the troops, the USO Wounded Warrior Site, and a high impact entertainment section to showcase the volunteer talent that the USO provides to the troops.



## Strategy

Elise developed and led this highly-successful social media campaign for the USO during Veteran's Day 2010. The campaign used social media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs) to virally-ask people to say thanks.

## Results

The campaign collected more than 50,000 messages and more than 25,000 actions on Facebook. At the same time, 50,000 email addresses were captured and added to the USO file for future fundraising. Messages were retweeted by numerous celebrities including Toby Keith, Warren Sapp, and Alyssa Milano.

This campaign raised more than \$250,000.