

WordPress and SilverStone Group:

a match made in dd|a heaven

SilverStone Group is a shining illustration of a client for whom we have recently conducted a brand refresh and developed a new website on a highly customized WordPress platform. SilverStone Group's brand promise is "Wisdom at Work." Our promise to SilverStone Group? **WordPress at Work.**

We invest unquantifiable energy in developing on-target brand communication, cutting-edge design and strong client partnerships. One of our greatest assets is our love for and strength in leveraging the WordPress platform and content management system (CMS).

This note briefly introduces SilverStone Group's case study, and focuses in on dd|a's passion for truly making the most of WordPress' robust utility and uniquely efficient content management tools to drive a brand.

dd|a

industry setting

The insurance industry comprises nearly 4,000 companies, employs 2.2 million people in the U.S. alone, and accounted for \$425 billion – 3% of the 2009 U.S. Gross Domestic Product.¹

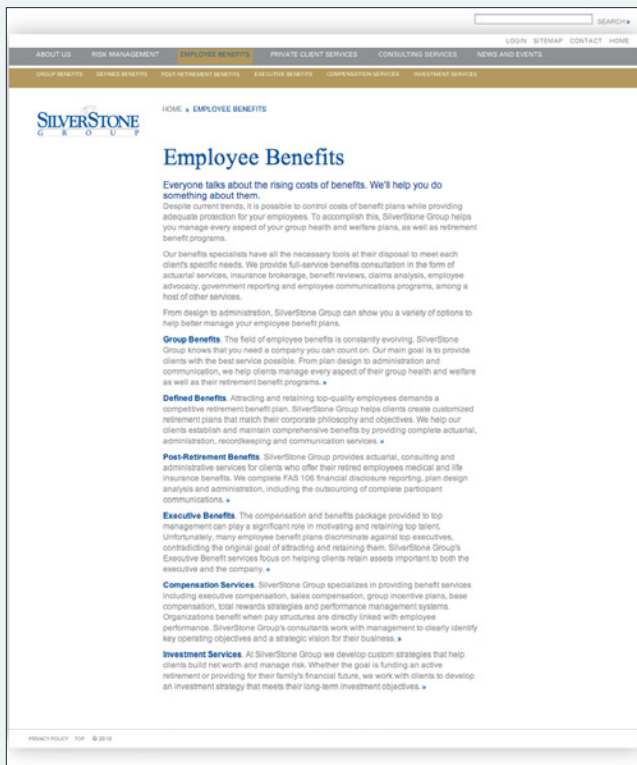
SilverStone Group began as a two-person operation in a small office in Council Bluffs, IA and, in 66 years, has grown into a five-satellite, 200-employee agency headquartered in Omaha. Though the intense industry landscape might threaten some companies, Silverstone Group's uncompromising Midwestern values and business acumen have fostered a great reputation and unshakable trust from its clientele.

¹ "Insurance Industry at a Glance." Insurance Information Institute. www.iii.org/facts_statistics/industry-overview.html. 22 August 2011.

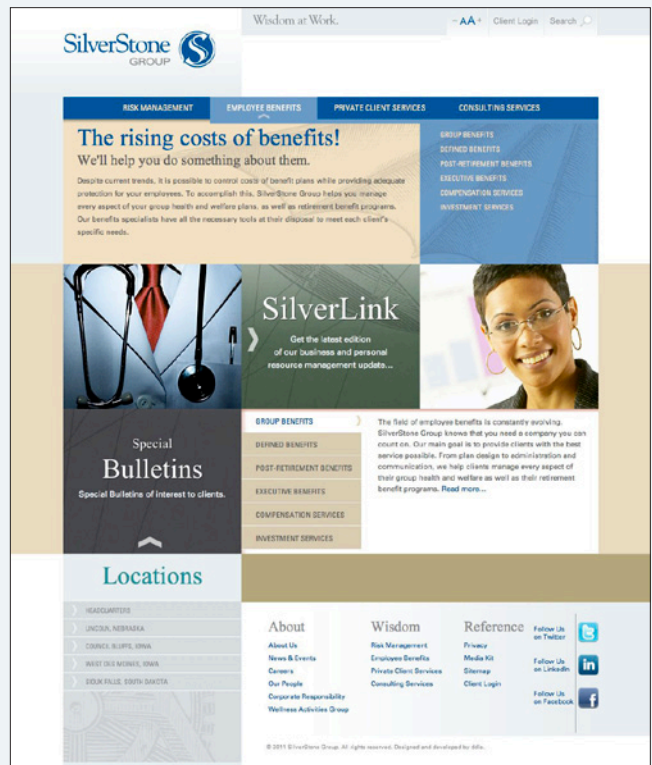
challenge

SilverStone Group's integrity had built a strong brand, but it was in need of a refresh to better articulate its promise. Most importantly, in an increasingly web-driven society, the company needed an updated website to communicate extensive – at times, potentially overwhelming – amounts of information about the array of services and insights offered in several areas, including Risk Management, Employee Benefits, Private Client Services and Consulting Services.

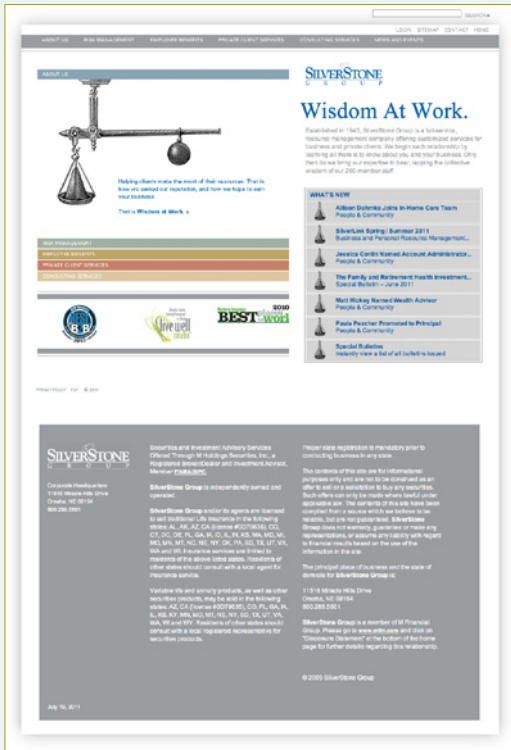
The challenge was aesthetic, functional and operational. SilverStone Group needed to achieve an updated look and feel to guide SilverStone Group into the future, while honoring the time-tested presence of a well-positioned, successful and trusted brand. Additionally, the architecture of the site



previous employee benefits landing page



new employee benefits landing page



previous home page



above: new home page

at left:
We were able to include a lot of fine-print "Disclosures" text right there on the home page with an expandable panel.

required a structure that allowed users an intuitive, easy exploration of the website's comprehensive content. Finally, we had to ensure that this online resource had an efficient behind-the-scenes tool to free up time for SilverStone Group's marketing team; enabling them to manage content and smooth their workload and workflow.

strategy

Developing a fresh, user-friendly feel for a comprehensive, information-rich website, while

honoring brand equity was where ddla had a chance to test its innovation, push the envelope and show a little bit of what WordPress has to offer, with some strategic fine-tuning.

The site needed to 1) contain exceptionally large amounts of information, 2) be positioned for intuitive user-navigation and consumption of that information, 3) be easily updatable by SilverStone Group employees internally, and, of course, 4) look sharp.

In short, WordPress at Work.

Why WordPress?

When one hears “WordPress,” often an average, ho-hum blog comes to mind, but if used correctly, WordPress is arguably the most spectacularly efficient CMS tool out there.* We’ve explored many avenues in the industry and are smitten with WordPress for a handful of reasons that were the foundation of our approach to SilverStone Group’s site.**

» **It’s friendly, smart and dynamic.** WordPress is as user-friendly as can be, whether just one person needs the capability to make updates to the site, or many require access at the same time. It can be configured so that users only see what needs to be updated on the back end to alleviate any confusion about where words, images or links ought to be placed, knowing that “guessing games” are much less fun than they sound when it comes to editing a live website.

WordPress can be set up to handle making one change to several pages automatically and seamlessly, saving the user time and opportunity for error. For example, SilverStone Group produces a quarterly business and personal resource management publication called *SilverLink*. We designed the site to push individual articles not only to the home page and *SilverLink* page, but also to the landing page for each division to which it applies. Furthermore, articles are set to automatically archive, so that the user never needs to go back and weed things out to make room for new information.

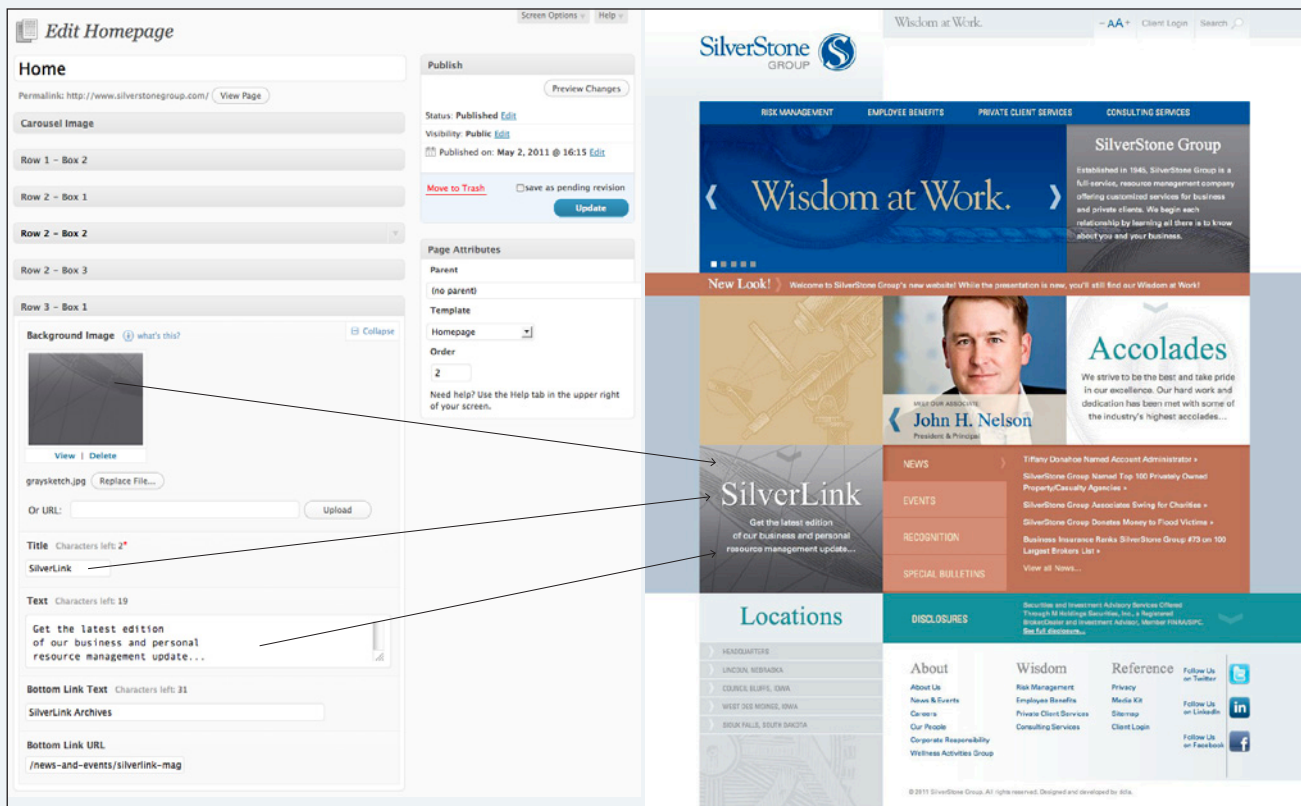
WordPress is extraordinarily friendly with search engines, as well. On its own, WordPress facilitates Search Engine Optimization (SEO), but with a bit of tweaking by a developer, can be strengthened even more.

It’s customizable and organizable. A WordPress site can be as fancy and intricate (or as simple and straightforward) as it needs to be, and still feel manageable.

SilverStone Group has more than 700 pages that populate the site, yet the backend information is so well organized that any page is accessible within two user clicks, and identified with SilverStone Group-specific nomenclature. Although the pages of the complex site vary, WordPress has a consistent field on the backend, eliminating the user’s need to “get your bearings” upon diving into a different section of the site to make updates. With minimal training and support, fields for data entry are intuitive, seamless and choreographed to align with the acute design of each page so that even the web-shy layman can confidently make changes and know that the appearance of the site will never be compromised.

*Disclaimer: WordPress did not pay for this endorsement.

**Disclaimer: As the saying goes, “Don’t try this at home.” WordPress is superb, but without ever-evolving expertise in site development and coding, the CMS might as well just be a ‘ho hum blog’ platform.



We approached SilverStone Group’s website with the structure of sliding boxes and layers of information that are appealing to the eye and that elicit site visitor interaction. One might worry that updates on the backend could cause boxes to shift, fonts to misalign, text to overflow, etc., but the WordPress CMS is incredibly easy to use, especially with a few adaptations tailoring it to SilverStone Group’s specific website structure. Though text and images can be switched out, and page structure can be modified as time goes on, the user can rest assured that the site will always look as it was designed to look.

And, just like business, WordPress is global when it needs to be. WordPress can help to seamlessly integrate multiple language translations into a site, whether the site content is identical in each translation or varies. It is not only easy for site visitors to navigate between translations, but also for the back-end user to select which iteration of the site content they intend to edit.

» **It's expandable.** Once a site is created, it is never locked down. Our answer is always, believe it or not, "Yes, you can make changes and add that later." One can always build on ideas and integrate improvements big or small as the client and site present a need for it.

For example, if SilverStone Group were to hypothetically incorporate another industry specialization into their services, the website could be expanded to include corresponding pages. Or, if it were decided that occasional video-casts would support their business, a dedicated section could be added to the home page. Furthermore, all it would take to stream videos from the site would be a visit to the back-end to paste the video's "Vimeo" number into the appropriate field.

» **It's social.** WordPress can integrate social media, blogs and discussion boards from different venues into individual sites incredibly well. For example, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn feeds can be leveraged directly on to a page of a site if it aligns with client objectives. A WordPress developer even has the capability to seamlessly pull comments from other websites – for example, a third party blog discussion – into a site's own discussion page.

» **It's safe and sound.** At its core, WordPress is secure. It is an open source site built and refined by the community of people who are geniuses with the intricacies of web development and are invested in its stability and integrity. A tremendously intelligent, specialized team at WordPress monitors and explores each community contribution to ensure its applicability and safety for the CMS and its users, which is why many of the most sensitive and secure sites employ a WordPress backend.

WordPress users have a high degree of security and privacy around administrator controls, even within their internal teams who manage/update the site. For example, some individual users may be able to create new pages, edit live pages, moderate discussions, etc.; while others may only be able to contribute to pages, requiring virtual permission of an administrator for any changes to update the live site. The range of roles and degree of associated permissions varies based on site needs.

Furthermore, WordPress is quite thorough. Past versions of pages are automatically saved on the backend, making it quick and painless to "undo" changes made or compare current copy and revisions with copy that previously appeared on the site.

It's easy for a top-level site Administrator to add a secure WordPress user, and specify the permissions they'll have on the back-end by clarifying their role as a fellow "Administrator," "Editor," "Author," "Contributor," or "Revisor."

Add New User

Create a brand new user and add it to this site.

Username (required)

E-mail (required)

First Name

Last Name

Website

Password (twice, required)

Strong Hint: The password should be at least seven characters long. To make it stronger, use upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols like ! " ? \$ % ^ & .

Send Password? Send this password to the new user by email.

Role

- Subscriber
- Administrator
- Editor
- Author
- Contributor
- Revisor

[Add New User](#)

Edit Internal Page

About Us

Permalink: <http://www.silverstonegroup.com/about-us.html> [Edit](#) [View Page](#)

Upload/Insert Visual HTML

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Paragraph Styles × × ☰ ☷ ☹ ☺ ☻ ☼ ☽ ☿ ♁ ♃ ♅ ♇

When SilverStone Group's founder, H.H. "Red" Nelson, started his insurance business in a one-room, two-person office in Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1945, he never dreamed that 65 years later the firm would have grown to five offices employing nearly 200 Associates.

Our business was built on the Midwestern ethic of hard work, honesty, integrity and fairness -- and on the idea that the client's needs should come first. It's the right thing to do -- and it's just good business.

While other national competitors downsize, SilverStone Group continues to bring highly skilled and talented men and women onboard. We realize that excellent customer service doesn't just happen -- it's the result of a dedicated team whose only goal is to "be there" when our clients need us. At SilverStone Group, customer service isn't just a department -- it's an attitude.

When our company was founded, it was not unusual to have to use 10 or more different insurance companies to underwrite large risks due to the lack of financial capacity.

Today, under the leadership of the Nelson family's third generation, the world of

Path: p

Word count: 455 Draft saved at 5:54:35 pm. Last edited by Bridgette_Muller on August 17, 2011 at 8:59 pm

Top Images

Page Info

Right Square 1

Right Square 2

Bio Square

Bottom Rectangle

Revisions

- [17 August, 2011 @ 19:42](#) by Bridgette_Muller
- [17 August, 2011 @ 19:42](#) [Autosave] by Bridgette_Muller
- [21 June, 2011 @ 2:58](#) by Michelle_Hansen

Status: **Published** [Edit](#)

Visibility: **Public** [Edit](#)

Published on: **May 11, 2011 @ 12:05** [Edit](#)

[Move to Trash](#) save as pending revision

[Update](#)

Page Attributes

Parent: (no parent)

Template:

Order:

Need help? Use the Help tab in the upper right of your screen.

The "Revisions" field at the bottom shows the three most recent versions of the "About Us" page, including the individual user who made the updates and the date on which they were made, for quick and easy reference or reversion.

results

**“We absolutely love our re-branding!
The website is amazing and the content
management tool is like a dream!”**

Michelle Hansen, SilverStone Group
Director of Marketing & Communications.

SilverStone Group’s new brand alludes to its strong legacy, and crisply “holds its own” in the community, vast insurance industry and global Web-scape. Its site is unique, memorable, cohesive, attractive, comprehensive, intuitive, digestible and user-friendly.

**“Overall, you can mark us off the charts with
how satisfied we are,” said Michelle.**

The site has been “live” for less than a month at the time this note is being written, but SilverStone Group has already received measurable praise from its clientele for the new website, and are confident that it will continue to see increased traffic as the strength of its resources are magnified, especially subscriptions to its news and content.

One immediate benefit is the marked reduction in time costs associated with inefficient website maintenance. Additionally, costs are being saved by the marketing team as they do not need to continue outsourcing certain requests for website support.

In short, SilverStone Group is well on its way to success across a variety of return-on-investment metrics.

about dd|a

We use WordPress on a daily basis, and continuously explore ways that we can maximize its potential. It might be safe to say that it’s an honorary member of our innovative team of strategists/artists/developers/brand-fanatics.

We are a holistic branding firm encompassing brand consulting, strategic full service advertising, marketing, graphic design and website development. Located in Omaha, Nebraska, we professionally counsel brand-driven businesses everywhere in making every customer interaction count.

Learn more about what we do and what makes us tick at dday.com.

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about SilverStone Group

Well, it sure would be a shame to read boilerplate copy, in this instance, wouldn’t it?

See “Wisdom at Work.” at SilverStoneGroup.com

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