Maui Jim Keeps Innovating the Customer Experience with Akamai Image & Video Manager

> " *Every digital property needs to deliver a great experience, and we are able to serve up those great experiences without fail via Image Manager."*
>
> – *Jim Ferolo , CIO , Maui Jim*

Background

Akamai Image & Video Manager provides a unique blend of algorithmic complexity with the flexibility to use it in the simplest ways and still deliver a better user experience. Plus, it works seamlessly with the rest of Akamai's product portfolio. Maui Jim recognized that it offered a low-effort way for the company to get maximum return.

Staying Agile While Delivering on Consumer Expectations

When you're one of the largest privately held brands in your market, there is unrelenting pressure to deliver a customer and brand experience that continues to set you apart. That's the case for Maui Jim, which has been selling sunglasses for more than 35 years and continues to introduce revolutionary lenses, most recently in its eyeglass collection. Just like his colleagues, Jim Ferolo, the company's CIO, goes above and beyond to distinguish Maui Jim as a leader and ensure the company's customers and partners get the online experience they expect.

To market and service its products, Maui Jim relies heavily on four digital properties including a direct-to-consumer website, a business-to-business site for eyecare professionals offering prescription sunglasses and optical glasses, a portal for product repairs, and mobile applications. Consumers can view and purchase products via the Maui Jim mobile catalog application while its account executives use a mobile app to service their trade accounts. Combined, these digital applications serve millions of visitor sessions every month.

To keep a competitive edge, Maui Jim strives to remain agile and dynamic, exhibiting the brand attributes of best-of-breed retail sites. However, this became challenging when the company found it cumbersome to manage and update the multiple images associated with its 5000+ SKUs.

COMPANY

Maui Jim
Peoria, Illinois
www.mauijim.com

INDUSTRY

Media & Entertainment

SOLUTIONS

Image & Video Manager

KEY IMPACTS

- Reduced image sizes up to 75% across mobile and desktop

- Eliminated the need to create image variants and derivatives

- Improved performance without sacrificing image quality

- Boosted Google page speed index and SEO ranking

- Enhanced conversion rates

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Seeking a Better Image Optimization Experience

When Maui Jim releases a new product, it concurrently launches a microsite with related landing pages populated with relevant, high-quality images. A dedicated content coordinator is responsible for managing these images to ensure they render quickly for every site and app visitor. Unfortunately, the image management tool the company used fell short. It was time-consuming and challenging to upload images and configure different profiles for different devices and user scenarios.

Maui Jim was in the midst of refactoring its sites to realize performance gains and support new international markets; it was extremely interested in improving global performance to ensure the best user experience regardless of geography or device. To that end, Jim Ferolo's team conducted baseline performance testing, synthetic testing, and real user monitoring during the site relaunch design-and-development phase. These tests made it clear that Maui Jim had hit a threshold when it came to optimizing image performance and quality with its previous image management solution.

"We wanted to move to the next level with our image performance and quality to deliver the best digital and performative experience for each site and app visitor. While we could have gotten there with our previous solution, it would have taken lots of time and effort that wouldn't ultimately pay off," he explains.

Akamai Image & Video Manager Provides a Dynamic, Adaptive Solution

The Maui Jim team investigated the possibility of doing adaptive loading based on agent detection, using custom JavaScript to push images. In fact, Jim had handled image optimization that way in the past but felt it wasn't a realistic approach. "Device platforms, browsers, image quality improvements, and compression algorithms all change so quickly. It's nearly impossible to truly optimize an image for a certain display on a specific device in real time in this fashion. At the very least, it can't be done economically and efficiently," he says.

To empower his lean digital group, Jim wanted an adaptive platform that handled all image-optimization requirements dynamically. As a customer of Akamai's performance solutions, Maui Jim naturally considered Akamai Image & Video Manager. Once Jim and his team saw the Image & Video Manager demo, the choice was clear.

> *It's really challenging for us to take into account environmental factors on the user's end, but it's core to what Akamai does."*
>
> — *Jim Ferolo , CIO , Maui Jim*

Jim was impressed by the fact that Akamai's engineers continually adapt Image & Video Manager to keep pace with changing devices and platforms to optimally handle the connected speed of end-user devices. According to Jim, "It's really challenging for us to take into account environmental factors on the user's end, but it's core to what Akamai does."

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"Akamai Image Manager provides a unique blend of algorithmic complexity with the flexibility to use it in the simplest ways and still deliver a better user experience. Plus, it works seamlessly with the rest of Akamai's product portfolio. We saw it offered a low-effort way for us to get maximum return," he continues.

Automating Image Optimization with a Dependable Technology and Partner

With Image & Video Manager in place, Maui Jim has eliminated the need to create image variants and derivatives for each user request since Image & Video Manager handles this automatically. It also reduced image bytes by up to 75% across its mobile and desktop sites without compromising image quality. As Jim describes it, the Akamai solution has helped the company deliver a better global experience. In turn, Maui Jim has realized an improvement in its Google page speed index and SEO ranking as a result of its site relaunch and Image & Video Manager implementation and has seen its conversion rate enhanced.

As Jim explains, what holistically enables a great user experience is the right high-quality content that loads quickly. However, he underscores that the experience also depends on the uptime and consistent availability of the platform delivering that content. "Akamai doesn't just provide a great product but one that works all the time. It's the operational backbone Akamai delivers that sets it apart," he explains.

Maui Jim has realized an improvement in its Google page speed index and SEO ranking.

From Jim's perspective, web and digital experiences will continue to be visually driven, especially for the Maui Jim brand. Though the company manages and publishes a moderate number of images, Jim says he'd be highly confident in Image & Video Manager even if the Maui Jim catalog contained 1 million images.

"Many direct-to-consumer brands say they're different because they focus on the customer, but we've been doing that for 35 years — and it keeps customers coming back. You stay competitive by doing the right thing every time. It's easy to say, but difficult to execute. However, that's what I look for in my professional relationships and when purchasing technology. That's what I found in Akamai," he concludes.

Akamai secures and delivers digital experiences for the world's largest companies. Akamai's intelligent edge platform surrounds everything, from the enterprise to the cloud, so customers and their businesses can be fast, smart, and secure. Top brands globally rely on Akamai to help them realize competitive advantage through agile solutions that extend the power of their multi-cloud architectures. Akamai keeps decisions, apps, and experiences closer to users than anyone — and attacks and threats far away. Akamai's portfolio of edge security, web and mobile performance, enterprise access, and video delivery solutions is supported by unmatched customer service, analytics, and 24/7/365 monitoring. To learn why the world's top brands trust Akamai, visit www.akamai.com, blogs.akamai.com, or @Akamai on Twitter. You can find our global contact information at www.akamai.com/locations. Published 02/20.