

Half Price Drapes Increases Year-Over-Year Conversions by Optimizing Images and Site Delivery with Akamai Solutions



“ Akamai provides a suite of solutions that enable modern e-commerce sites to deliver outstanding experiences to today’s shoppers.”

– Steve Basch, E-Commerce Manager, Half Price Drapes

Half Price Drapes uses Akamai’s Image Manager, Ion, and mPulse to reduce its home page load time to less than three seconds. Fantastic load times have helped Half Price Drapes achieve year-over-year increases in conversion rates.

Satisfying Modern Online Shoppers

When your company designs, sources, and produces its own products, it’s in the unique position to keep quality high and prices low. That describes Half Price Drapes, a family-owned business that has designed and provided more than 1 million quality window coverings. Since growing from a small workroom and storefront started in 2005 to a leading e-commerce specialty company today, Half Price Drapes has evolved its digital presence. Today its site, comprising approximately 2,500 pages and more than 100,000 images, serves about 70,000 unique visitors per month on average – with spikes close to 100,000 visitors in October and November. Approximately 60% of site visitors are on mobile devices.

Like many online businesses, the company needs to strike a balance between image quality and site performance. “In addition to providing an aesthetically pleasing site, we need to quickly deliver pages to time-sensitive shoppers,” explains Steve Basch, E-Commerce Manager for Half Price Drapes.

Trading Image Quality for Speed

Along with seeing images of curtains and drapes, shoppers need to search on various facets such as fabric and color options. To enable its sophisticated digital presence, the company has developed a modern site architecture that includes more than 60 third-party applications. “Our site is complex, featuring many moving parts – including dynamic pages and drop-down menus. To keep the site fresh, we change it two or more times per month,” continues Basch.



COMPANY

Half Price Drapes
Pleasanton, California
www.HalfPriceDrapes.com

INDUSTRY

Retail & Consumer Goods

SOLUTIONS

- Image Manager
- Ion
- mPulse

KEY IMPACTS

- Gained ability to compress images based on site visitor browser and device
- Reduced home page load time to less than three seconds
- Improved key product and category page load times
- Gained insight into real site visitor experiences
- Drove year-over-year increases in conversion rates

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Half Price Drapes handles every aspect of its business in-house, including product photo shoots. Previously, it stored images on in-house servers and compressed them as much as possible using a free online tool. While the tool helped produce smaller images, the company was left managing multiple derivatives of each photo. Plus, the tool did not necessarily provide the highest possible quality for the situation at hand because it was not able to optimize images for each site visitor.

Calling Upon Sophisticated Solutions

This free online tool was simply not enough to satisfy Half Price Drapes's advanced requirements. So the company upgraded to Akamai Ion and Image Manager. With Image Manager, Half Price Drapes could store and optimize images based on each site visitor's browser and device. A tree map in Image Manager helps Half Price Drapes determine which images load the most slowly. Ion then serves pages and images at high speed while accounting for Internet conditions.

"We can now apply blanket compression policies and make image changes on the fly, such as for promotional banners. Most importantly, we can rapidly deliver the optimal images to each site visitor," says Basch.

Optimizing the Site Visitor Experience

Pleased with the impact of Image Manager and Ion, Basch chose to also take advantage of mPulse via the Akamai Control Center. As a real user monitoring solution, mPulse enables Basch to understand the site experience from the perspective of actual shoppers. By correlating performance with visitor locations, the company can take measures such as more strategically retargeting site visitors.

"mPulse is like Google Analytics on steroids. It puts all the numbers I need at my fingertips in visual dashboards, providing a complete picture of what is happening with site visitors. This includes details such as completed sessions, bounce rates, and even revenue. With this insight, we can do things like dedicate budget where it makes sense and eliminate it where we aren't seeing a return," Basch says.

Basch can also run what-if scenarios to understand the potential impact of a site change and correlate page groups with conversion metrics. In one instance, he discovered via mPulse that icon images were causing performance issues. He fixed the issue using Image Manager and saw a performance improvement. "The Akamai tools work well together to help us understand where to focus our efforts and deliver the best online experience possible," he continues.



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Accelerating Performance and Revenue Generation

Since implementing the Akamai solutions, Half Price Drapes has reduced its home page load time to less than three seconds. Other key product and category pages load within three to five seconds. "These are fantastic load times. And conversions take off when our site is faster. Combined with the site changes we've made, the Akamai solutions have helped us achieve year-over-year increases in conversion rates," concludes Basch.



Half Price Drapes is a family-owned business designing and providing quality window coverings since 2005. Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, HPD has grown from a small workroom and storefront, serving our local community, to a leading e-commerce specialty company. HPD now provides a wide range of ready-made, made-to-order, and custom products across the country and beyond. From New York to Miami, Seattle to San Diego, and everywhere in between, Half Price Drapes has dressed more than 1 million windows across North America. www.HalfPriceDrapes.com.



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](http://www.akamai.com), blogs.akamai.com, or [@Akamai](https://twitter.com/Akamai) on Twitter. You can find our global contact information at www.akamai.com/locations.

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