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CASE STUDY

CDS delivers  
consumer investor  
focused content hub  
**Aberdeen Asset  
Management**

**Aberdeen**  
Asset management



# requirements

## CDS delivers Thinking Aloud for Aberdeen Asset Management

Aberdeen Asset Management launched their consumer investor focussed content hub 'Thinking Aloud', developed by content management system delivery partner CDS.

The project has successfully reached hundreds of thousands of new consumers attracting more than one thousand percent more viewers than previous approaches to social and content engagement.

Thinking Aloud is a mobile first, social platform for thought leadership exchange with regularly refreshed, magazine style content to engage, educate and entertain. It was branded 'Thinking Aloud' to differentiate the materials, content and strategy from Aberdeen's primary corporate identity.

### The challenge

Market changes led to Aberdeen Asset Management (AAM) identifying a strategic goal to engage more directly with end-customers. The main target audience was any financially literate individual with a pension pot to invest, now or in the future. Well documented changes to pension regulation drove change, resulting in the industry shifting focus to 'D2C' (Direct to Consumer). The first goal of any direct to consumer (D2C) proposition is to identify, connect with and build a relationship with potential consumers.

However, current marketing and content was geared towards a channel, or institutional investor with little to engage a consumer audience.

As Aberdeen grows its reach to be recognised by consumers not just the intermediary channel, it became vital to deliver compelling and easy to consume content to all of their audiences around the world in their key markets.

### Research and insights that underpinned the strategy

As a key digital partner CDS developed a digital road map to help guide Aberdeen's digital transformation programme.

CDS led workshops and designed Information Architecture focused on:

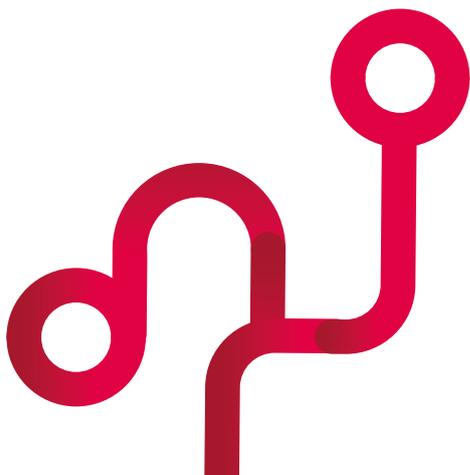
- Delivery of content via a dedicated website
- Enabling social media content delivery
- Syndicated/shared content across other AAM websites and applications
- Segmented content - by region, language, audience, category and content type

A key moment, and thus the key insight, in the design of the project was recognising that to build a viable direct to consumer proposition would be challenging without first developing a connection with a potential customer base. The Thinking Aloud project is therefore designed to generate insight and data about Aberdeen's customers.

### The strategy

The most effective way to deliver content is through a Content Hub. AAM and CDS produced a Target Operating Model and supporting data flow and user journey process strategy to meet the objectives of the project, within technical and compliance constraints.

Engaging customers with genuine news worthy/magazine style content that educates results in positive brand equity in the minds of future customers. Aberdeen will be recognised as a business that, helpfully inform customers on future investment trends and related news.



# solutions

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The site was built using Aberdeen's existing CMS (content management system). The Thinking Aloud UK and global variants, USA, Italy, Australia and new European sites, had to be responsive to make it easy to deliver and consume content across mobile, tablet and desktop devices.

## **Taking a Mobile First approach**

Aberdeen sites were traditionally built for desktop. Our new engagement targeted a more magazine style experience on a tablet for a home user and commuter rather than the office worker.

## **Focus on social sharing and curation**

We needed to build a brand new customer base. We focused on using social media channels to allow content to be easily and quickly seeded, shared and viewed.

## **Focus on video as 'hero' content**

Short, friendly, animated videos featuring 'hero' content were utilised to drive traffic to the primary Thinking Aloud website(s) where consumers could engage with more detailed investment articles.

## **Value added content**

Aberdeen provided useful content freely to the general public. Calls to action are primarily related to viewing more content and encouraging friends to read and share rather than on selling. We used subtle signposting to guide customers to primary Aberdeen platforms.

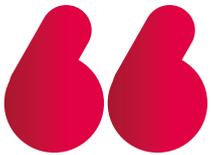
## **Consistency and regularity**

AAM brand awareness is embedded in the project delivery from design through to content delivery and creation - ensuring consistency in the use of colour, imagery, typography and iconography.

Content is refreshed regularly with input from the CDS Editorial team to help the experts within Aberdeen increase the throughput and journalistic flow of materials.

## **CRM connectivity**

We do have business objectives in mind, so the project has facilitated integration with CRM and onto more sales orientated engagement in the future.



This was Aberdeen's first venture into social integration and digitally responsive thought leadership. Aberdeen benefited from great development and execution delivered by CDS.

**RAY COLLINS,**  
**ABERDEEN ASSET MANAGEMENT**

The site itself utilises commonly understood web analytics and customer journey tracks. Paid media ROI is measured through these tracks as well as onsite journeys.

The site is designed as a feeder to primary sites, with key metric tracks including:

- Social media (YouTube) click through rates
- Returning visitor numbers (content is refreshed regularly and is designed to encourage repeat visits).
- As the content is 'rich' time on site per visit is targeted to be higher than a standard wealth management visit.
- 'Shares' by visitors to encourage word of mouth growth in traffic
- Upstream click through from content through to primary Aberdeen portals is also a call to action target.

#### Measuring success

- YouTube views went from approximately 100–300 views per video to well over 300,000 views per video in several of the website launched campaigns. The project increased Aberdeen's social and content engagement, supporting the launch of major investments in content and video, such as: The Seven Deadly Sins of Multi-Asset Investing.

- The success of the strategy has resulted in the project being rolled out from the UK to the USA, Italy, Australia, and the rest of Europe and has increased visitor traffic on content by up to one thousand percent. These statistics are publicly viewable on YouTube.

Ultimately we now have REACH into a consumer market. We have hundreds of thousands of viewers in the UK and are developing similar at scale databases in other territories as the project rolls out. From a previous position of very light connectivity with a consumer audience Thinking Aloud now provides us with insight into what customers engage with/ what is driving their interests today. This gives us a platform on which to build a long term conversation with future customers.

The technical approach we took also proved its value as one single process and structure originally developed for one market has been readily rolled out into the USA, Italy and Australia in less than 12 months, with comparatively low additional costs per market.

The same admin system underpins all of the global websites allowing for easy updates, consistent branding and content delivery at again, a low total operating cost.

For further information about CDS products and services

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