ABOUT THE CLIENT

Auction.com is a leading online marketplace that deals in real estate and is headquartered in the United States of America. The client has distinguished itself as the world leader in maximized asset disposition strategies, asset management and real estate sales. Auction expertises in selling residential, commercial, luxury homes, multi-family and hospitality properties, land, as well as performing and non-performing notes and loan pools. To date, Auction.com has sold over $26 billion of real estate assets.

In 2011, residential sales totaled $1.8 billion and 35,000 homes were auctioned; a commercial real estate division auctioned 1,169 Notes totaling over $4.6 billion at a recovery rate of 52 percent. Additionally, it auctioned 1,087 REOs valued at $1.2 billion with an average recovery price at 103 percent of the reserves.

GOALS OF THE PROJECT

The client, Auction.com, was looking for an online platform through which it can work directly with lenders, financial institutions, developers and private parties in acquiring and selling properties. The client consistently conducts auctions throughout the United States and abroad, ranging from live ballroom mega-auctions to local on-site and courthouse auctions. It required the building/ development of an equally active and effective platform to conduct online auctions. We served this requirement by developing a proprietary and best-in-class online auction platform: auction.com. Although the end product is performing satisfactorily today, but things were not as easy when we started off.
To stay organized and keep the development process steady and prompt, we started with setting goals.

Our goal was to develop a website that can facilitate the home buyers and investors to bid live at ballroom auctions, using a webcast platform, or participate in online-only auctions through using a state-of-the-art online bidding system where buyers bid in real time as the auction progresses.
The Goal was to enrich auction.com as an online platform where users can perform all operations right from basic (Creating account, registering themselves for auctions) to very complex (Online bidding on high value properties).

auction.com

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"Clavax has been instrumental in meeting our objectives. When we decided to chose for a web development service provider, we did extensive search. I am happy that we chose Clavax. The team worked with us in close coordination to identify what will best serve our requirement, and accordingly it delivered us the result"

— Robert Friedman,
chairman and co-founder

CHALLENGES

Auction.com is a huge project that demanded a lot of dedication and a fine eye to the details. The company was affected by system integration deficiencies and lack of automation for many time-consuming tasks. Auction.com was using a third party solution to manage all their asset information, which was very small in size, generic and not at par with their business requirements. Mentioned below were some major challenges in the development of Auction.com and its supporting back-end CRM solutions.

DEVELOPMENT OF CRM

The Auction.com staff was using a number of different platforms to gather and analyze information for day-to-day activities. The goal was to develop one main centralized platform where most of the information/ data can sit and can be used for different purposes.

ONLINE AUCTIONS

Auction.com was doing only ballroom auctions initially, so a whole new online auction platform in real-time was needed to develop.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

An interactive way to manage assets for all business verticals, residential, commercial, notes and land data.

FRONT-END WEBSITE

This needs to be appealing to promote users for bidding with features like auto-seller, Randomizer, sealed bidding, proxy bidding etc.

CONTRACT AUTOMATION

The entire contract process was very time consuming and needed to be automated.

SCALABILITY

Since it was an auction website, large amounts of traffic was expected, so the system being developed should adopt the cluster configurations if required to change at a later stage.

SECURITY

A secure encryption code was to be implemented to ensure that the confidential data on the website would not be exposed to hackers.

TRAFFIC

The Auction website was registering a very high volume of traffic that needed to be managed and improved in an organized and optimized manner.

USER TRACKING

Complete user data tracking was required to ensure application integrity; system should generate reports for any data that is edited by any particular user at any time.

REPORTING

System should have extensive support to report the sales, marketing and management.

SOLUTIONS

We conducted a quick and thorough analysis to identify the areas which would facilitate significant returns as a result of enhanced efficiency and business analysis. Considering all requirements, we then proposed a complete back-end CRM solution and front-end website. Mentioned below are different applications which we developed for Auction.com to facilitate their different business areas.

MLH

This application was developed for all communications between Auction.com and bidders (front-end customers). MLH has complete back-end User Management controls along with defined and customized roles for all kinds of business users and agents. MLH has different sections for each business vertical like Residential, Commercial, Notes and Land. All pre- and on-going auction activities are recorded here. Special modules have been designed to watch all auction data and perform operation during auctions.

RCP

We conducted a quick and thorough analysis to identify the areas which would facilitate significant returns as a result of enhanced efficiency and business analysis. Considering all requirements, we then proposed a complete back-end CRM solution and front-end website. Mentioned below are different applications which we developed for Auction.com to facilitate their different business areas.

AUCTION.COM

A complete bidding platform was designed and developed for Ballroom as well as online auctions. Users can open a bid by registering themselves on the site, selecting a property and by placing their bids on the property.

- It's a while labelled front-end website so features can be replicated in other countries if needed. As an example auction.com is planning to launch their services in Germany, so the code is designed to work in different languages and demographics.

Technologies Used

- PHP
- MYSQL
- PYTHON
- JAVA
- JQUERY
- BOTTLE FRAMEWORK OF PYTHON
- ANGULAR JS
- NODE.JS
- LAMP
- HTML5/ CSS3
- JIRA
- GREEN HOPPER

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

We used the following third party tools for effective management of the project:

JIRA and Green Hopper: We used JIRA as project management tool to help us strictly follow the complete project life cycle. The whole project was divided into different verticals and further into tasks among a team of analysts, team leads, QA and developers. Mentioned below is an example for any task to be accomplished.

- New Requirements/Modifications/Issues posted by Business User/Analyst/QA in JIRA.
- BRD document prepared for all new tasks, alternatively, any explanation posted by QA in case it's an issue. The ticket/ task is in planning mode while preparing BRD, once document is complete we change the status to Design and then Ready for development.
- Team leads assign the project to different team members according to their availability and experience in working on similar tasks.
- Team member changes the status to "In progress" when he starts working on a task and hits the development resolved button once he finishes the task.
- The task goes into QA and as per QA outcome, QA hits the QA resolved or QA unresolved button. If its QA unresolved, then it is sent back to the developer to get the problem fixed, before sending it back to the QA for review. If a task passes QA then its QA resolved.
- Once QA resolved, the task goes to Analyst, and is in UAT stage. Analyst confirms the task at his end and inform business about the task, once the business and analyst are good task is UAT resolved and ready to go in Release Cycle.
- We have a weekly release cycle, prepared by release manager and distributed among teams. Team leads review could prepare and add their changes related to specific ticket in release branch. Release branch merged to trunk on release day.