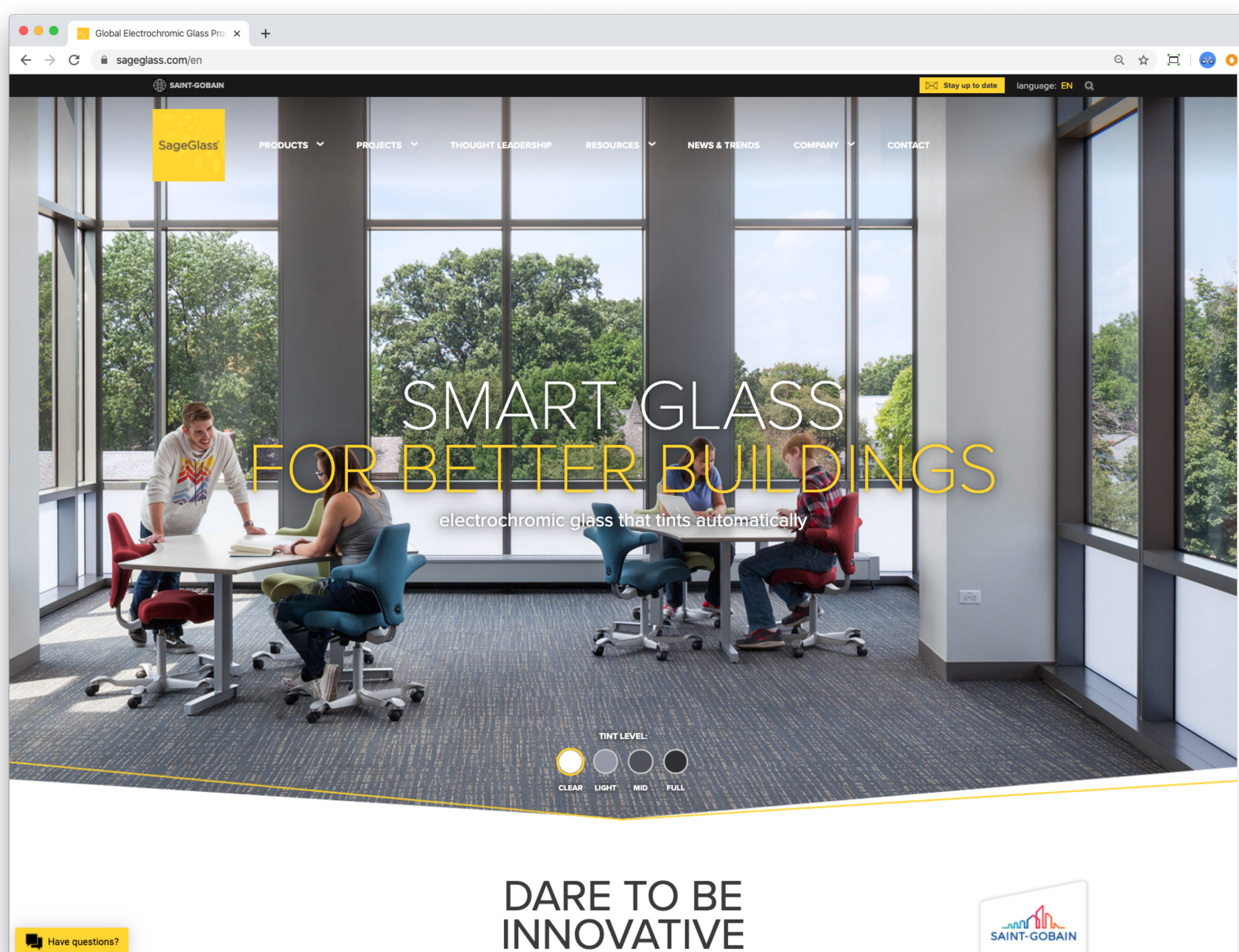Case Studies

Case Study: SageGlass

Ivan Stegic — April 27, 2020

MAKING A FUNCTIONAL SITE MORE EFFICIENT AND SECURE

SageGlass makes one product: the world's most intelligent, reliable electrochromic glass. Electrochromic glass (a.k.a. smart glass or dynamic glass) is an electronically tintable glass used for windows, skylights, facades and curtain walls and enables building owners to increase occupant comfort and reduce energy costs. SageGlass holds over 500 patents and their manufacturing plant (the world's most advanced), is located in Faribault, Minnesota.

Fun Fact: Ivan Stegic studied electrochromic glass as part of his graduate studies. So he was excited to go out and see their factory!

OUR ASSIGNMENT: AUDIT SAGEGLASS AND TAKE THEM ON AS A TEN7CARE SUPPORT CLIENT

SageGlass and their previous agency had decided to part ways right before the holidays in 2019. Emma Wilhelm, Senior Global Marketing Manager at SageGlass told us, "It was so late in the year, I had a moment of horror, *We can't manage our own Drupal site!* But then a person in my network referred me to TEN7, and said, 'I would totally trust these people.' I reached out, had a few quick conversations, and within a few days, TEN7 had access to our site, and we had a contract signed. TEN7 had our back really quickly."

Kate Huinker, Senior Marketing Specialist, added: "I was concerned about walking away from this other agency without understanding fully what TEN7 was capable of. But Tess and Ivan did the walkthrough with our old agency, and that's when I became really impressed, because I could just tell as they were talking, *they got it.* They saw the flaws in the site, and they knew what to do to improve it."

TEN7Audit & TEN7Improve

Before we take on any support client, we take them through our comprehensive onboarding process including a thorough site audit to get an overall lay of the land and identify any lurking security or performance issues. Once we did the handoff from SageGlass's former agency, we got to work on our audit, which took about two weeks.

"We didn't come asking for an audit," said Emma, "but once they explained why it was important, I thought, *That's exactly what we need. We don't know enough about this website to understand what's under the hood and what might be wrong with it!* So often websites just get hacked together and patched up, and that's definitely the case with ours. I thought it was very proactive to do the audit. As a client, it was a great way to start the relationship."

When the audit was complete, we compiled a report with a prioritized list of critical issues and recommendations for repair and optimization.

We found some critical issues (PHP, Drupal core and Drupal modules that needed updating), but for the most part, the issues we found were instances of best practices not being followed. For example, the site had custom code in the theme for functionality instead of using Drupal modules, and there was hard-coded content into the template. At worst, these practices could cause security vulnerabilities, but they were mainly creating technical debt and making the site harder to maintain.

We also recommended they do some improvements around site layout, streamline their content types, and update to Drupal 8 to improve caching, content structuring and gain other features, including improved multilingual support.

We presented the audit report to Emma and Kate. Emma told us, "I was blown away by our audit report! The way the audit was put together made me realize just how thoughtful TEN7 is about building and maintaining a website."

"I felt like I was in the right hands to get these things fixed, and I felt like TEN7 had our website's future in mind," shared Kate. "I trusted that they were going to make the site work and make it functional. They knew more than I did. When you find an agency you like, you have to be able to trust that they'll be the expert, and they're gonna do what's right for you."

The TEN7Improve Process

In the TEN7Improve phase, we implement selected recommendations from the audit report (at minimum the most critical), and then proceed with additional updates, depending on the client's budget and needs. SageGlass decided to have us immediately fix critical issues and also implement the best practices recommendations. Completing this work took about eight weeks.

SITE SUPPORT AND BEYOND

With critical and best practices issues fixed and the site made as secure as possible, we transitioned SageGlass to TEN7Care support client. We'll continue to do Drupal core, module and theme updates as needed. We also implemented offsite backups, using our Tractorbeam product. SageGlass will now have onsite backups at their host, Pantheon, and redundant offsite backups going to our infrastructure partner DigitalOcean, as well as to Amazon Web Services and Google Cloud.

Kate does double duty as SageGlass's Drupal content maintainer, and she'll be able to contact us with ad hoc requests. "We'll be making small changes here and there that will eventually evolve into bigger changes that we want to do," said Kate.

SageGlass looks forward to their website evolution. "We plan on introducing TEN7 to our new agency, Fast Horse, that's working on our company rebranding and site redesign," said Kate. "I think between the amazing dynamic of Fast Horse, and the skills that TEN7 brings, our website is going to be phenomenal! I'm excited to redo it finally, in the right way!"

Ivan Stegic
CEO

Words that describe Ivan: Relentlessly optimistic. Kind. Equally concerned with client and employee happiness. Physicist. Ethical. Lighthearted and cheerful. Finds joy in the technical stuff. Inspiring. Loyal. Hires smart, curious and kind employees who want to create more good in the world.

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