ULINE uses Adobe Experience Manager to manage product images efficiently at scale and optimize website image delivery.

ULINE

INCREASING PERFORMANCE

WITH IMAGE
OPTIMIZATION AT SCALE

Overview

ULINE sells hundreds of thousands of products to businesses through its website and catalog. Critical to their operational success is the efficient management of product imagery — from photo shoots through the website. Sirius helped ULINE deploy Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) Assets, document and implement their workflows, and configure image delivery through Adobe Dynamic Media.


The Challenge

It is essential for ULINE to manage product images at scale across their business. From packing supplies like bubble wrap and boxes to retail supplies like gift wrap and gloves, ULINE customers need high image clarity and color quality to quickly understand the product so they can make the right selection. In addition, operational efficiency and website performance are essential.

ULINE's biggest challenge was with image delivery reliability. Image delivery being down for hours can cost millions in potential revenue, damage client satisfaction and company reputation.

Another major issue Uline needed help resolving was improving its website performance. The web team worked hard to optimize site delivery for speed, but thousands of product images slowed site performance and impacted time to paint and site rankings.
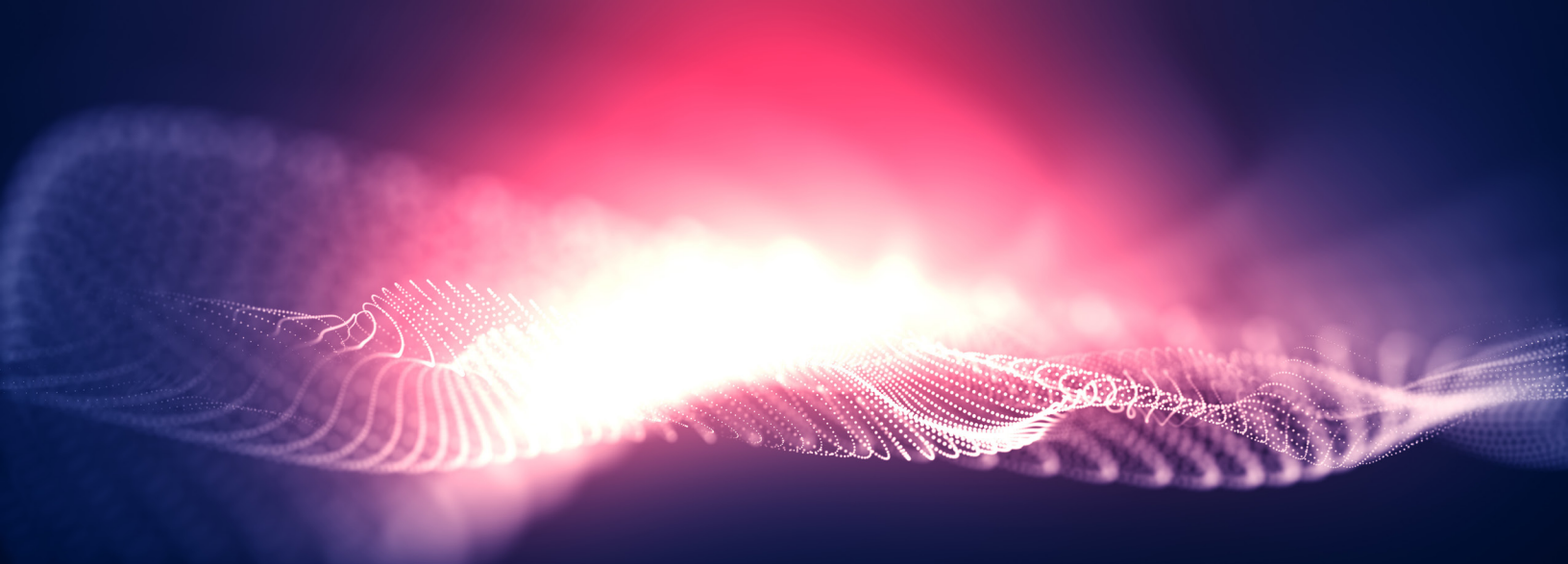
The Solution

Sirius first assisted ULINE in performing a proof of concept "bake-off" between Adobe Dynamic Media and Akamai Image Manager. Both Dynamic Media and Image Manager offer similar capabilities, but Adobe's ability to have both a DAM and Dynamic Media for image optimization and to manage the delivery images to the web helped reduce the overall solution complexity and won the contest for Adobe.

Sirius worked with ULINE to document their business workflows for image management and configure them within AEM Assets. Until now, most of those processes were "tribal knowledge." After configuring these workflows within AEM, Sirius migrated ULINE's extensive image catalog and coached the ULINE team on using the updated functionality. Visual process flows help the ULINE teams to understand the flow of assets and ensure the process configured meets business needs.

The team then configured Dynamic Media with AEM Assets to sync assets automatically. Once image delivery presets were configured, the images were then migrated to AEM. Finally, the solutions were tested, presets tuned, and launched.

Metrics

1. 40% - 50% observed image compression with high image quality

2. 100% observed uptime since implementation

The Outcomes

Image delivery performance: Adobe demonstrated significant improvement in image delivery compression, quality, and speed. Image sizes were 40% - 50% smaller while maintaining high-quality settings. The team tested and determined the optimal settings between image compression, format, and other settings.

Dynamic image optimization technology: Intelligent dynamic image optimization through Adobe's Smart Imaging v2 provides robust market-leading capabilities. Smart Imaging dynamically serves an optimized image to the end device, specific to the device type, resolution, and requesting browser. In addition, Dynamic Media also supports serving images in AVIF image format, which is a next-gen image format used by modern browsers and devices.

Reliability: In the event of the image source system being unavailable (AEM Assets in this instance), Dynamic Media provides the capability to serve a cached image until the source system becomes available again. Adobe Dynamic Media also provides an Active/Active failover, meaning there is an active backup environment ready in the event of an issue with the primary environment.

Cache management: Cache management capabilities were of critical importance to ULINE. AEM Assets provides cache management for single asset caching, multiple assets, or a full cache clear. This capability to manage image cache on Dynamic Media is built directly into the AEM Assets interface. From a unified interface, users can fully manage images without multiple tools.