



# HOW PHANTOM FIREWORKS EXECUTED AGAINST THEIR ROADMAP TO KEEP PACE WITH AN EXPLODING BUSINESS

## ABOUT PHANTOM

Based in Ohio, Phantom Fireworks was founded over 40 years ago by retailer and business entrepreneur Bruce J. Zoldan. While Bruce's career was rooted in the grocery and C-store space, he quickly identified unmet consumer needs in the non-food area and launched a line of sparklers. This led to early success which ultimately led him to becoming the #1 fireworks retailer in America.

Phantom's rich history and unparalleled expertise in the fireworks space was earned by a commitment to both excellence in product and in safety. The assortment can now be found in over 80 year-round showrooms in 15 states and another 2,000 temporary stores in 17 states all with a diverse line of products to celebrate every occasion from private label to the renowned Grucci collection—representing the pinnacle of fireworks craftsmanship.



## BUSINESS NEED

Phantom's success has always been driven by its best-in-class approach to retail. The brand, while rooted in its seasonality, scaled from its normal level in annual sales to well over 5x the average at its covid peak. This growth spurt accelerated their plans to scale their retail systems and business processes. Like other retailers during covid, Phantom needed to create a more sophisticated way to address omni-channel consumer shopping, customer service, digital experience, and business intelligence.

## COLUMBUS CONSULTING & THE PROJECT SCOPE

Phantom had a long history with the retail experts at Columbus Consulting and sought to once again partner with them to help them execute the roadmap previously built together. Columbus refreshed the IT roadmap and focused on addressing not only the immediate brand needs, but those that created a continued path for future opportunities. Specifically, honing in on the upgrade of their legacy ERP (13yr+) system and revisiting their business intelligence solutions, including their data warehouse and their website re-platforming and design.

Today, Columbus is assisting the Phantom team to best determine the appropriate steps to take in the continued evolution of their business plan.

According to Columbus Consulting's client manager, John Phillips, "Phantom has been an ideal partner in these projects. They not only treated Columbus like an extension of their team, but they empowered us to navigate challenges real-time, listened to our insights and fully embraced a long-term vision that kept everyone focused on the key deliverables that would make the most impact. The leadership team at Phantom continually helped to remove obstacles and remained resolute. They were accessible and collaborative."





## WHAT WAS DONE, THE CHALLENGES, SOLUTIONS, MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Columbus, well-informed on the company culture and business model, assembled a team of retail consultants well-suited to Phantom's priority areas. The group validated the company's needs and did a full due diligence on how to evolve their data warehouse, moving it to an AWS solution along with selecting a BI tool to further enhance both store level and corporate reporting.

In addition, Columbus was asked to revitalize the Phantom website, breaking the project into multiple phases in order to not disrupt the timeliness and necessity of the distribution channel around the brand's key seasons of July 4 and New Year's Eve.

Phase one of the site was a complete refresh using the business selected Shopify Plus platform. The project included expanding the product assortment online, optimizing the site performance and improving the overall functionality. Phase two further enhanced the experiences to include features such as "view your own fireworks show in 3D," "build, share and collaborate on your favorite lists", "what influencers are buying," and interactive checklists for ease of shopping in stores.

Additional development plans include further exploration of a BOPIS/BOPAC program and in store/online upselling features.

The ultimate goals for the project were defined as:

1. Re-design, enhance and optimize the existing Phantom website to provide omni-channel customer access to a broader selection with digital services and forthcoming features.
2. Select a BI solution and move the data warehouse to an AWS hosted solution.
3. Enhance the ability to sell and manage gift cards.
4. Assess POS for faster in-store checkout, optimal upselling, and expanded promotion and coupon offerings/execution.
5. Allow for the next stage of refining the IT roadmap and executing against that plan enabling the continued growth of the business.





## PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

The migration of the data warehouse along with enhanced BI tools/systems and the multi-phased work on the web development delivered data accuracy and enhanced capabilities for the business. The next phase of the website is in development and is being pushed live as work is completed. The Phantom team now has the ability to fortify their growth and enact their longer-term roadmap that better integrates their systems.

According to Phantom's CIO, Michael Coleman, "Columbus Consulting has brought the right team of experts with deep knowledge and years of experience at the right time for each of these projects. We are delighted with the success of these initiatives and look forward to many more years of collaboration."







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### **ABOUT COLUMBUS CONSULTING**

Columbus Consulting delivers solutions that drive true value and have been transforming the retail and CPG industries for over two decades. We are a retail consulting company of industry experts. Our approach is simple, if you do it, we do it. We are more than consultants; we are experienced practitioners who actually sat in our clients' seats. We understand the challenges, know what questions to ask and deliver the right solutions. Columbus offers a unique, consumer-centric approach with an end-to-end perspective that bridges functional & organization silos from strategy to execution. Our specialties include: unified commerce, merchandising & category management, planning & inventory management, sourcing & supply chain, data & analytics, accounting, finance & operations, people & organization and information technology. Let us know how we can help you. To learn more, visit [COLUMBUSCONSULTING.COM](http://COLUMBUSCONSULTING.COM)