

.INSURANCE Success Story: ICI

www.ici.insurance



“We wanted a domain that better explained ‘who’ we were. We thought that ICI.INSURANCE was very clean.”

RYAN MURRY,
PRESIDENT,
ICI

Established in 1885 and headquartered in El Dorado, Kansas, Insurance Center, Inc. - known commonly as “ICI”, is the oldest independent insurance agency in Butler County. Specializing in commercial property & casualty insurance, ICI represents more than 50 insurance carriers and is licensed in 34 states.

WHY .INSURANCE?

For decades, ICI has been a pioneer in embracing technological advancements. Besides being known for its’ hi-tech savvy, ICI is also a family business. Past President, Tom Murry, joined the company in 1981 – ushering in the innovative thinking that governs ICI today. Before many companies were using computers, ICI was going paperless.

“I think my father took ICI paperless before paperless was even a thing,” said current President, Ryan Murry.

That’s why when news of the .INSURANCE domain reached Murry, he knew it would be an excellent fit for ICI as it more closely aligned with the agency’s name and also signals to clients that they are ahead of the technology curve.

MIGRATION

When ICI rebranded from the Insurance Center, Inc. name in 2008, most of the .COM’s they wanted were already spoken for, and therefore options were limited. With the help of a marketing firm, they chose ICBLUESKIES.COM. The domain was chosen to reflect the marketing message to clients “when we do our job, you see blue skies.”

In 2014, Murry read an article from the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America that previewed the forthcoming .INSURANCE domain – but it wasn’t yet available. Murry wanted to be an early adopter and approached hosting provider Cloud Totally for assistance in securing the new domain name for ICI.

“Many agencies are commonly referred to in the market place using acronyms. We wanted to be first in line to secure our brand once the domain was released,” said Murry. “Blake Heinemann with Cloud Totally watched the domain for us for several months before it became available. The moment it was released, he jumped on it right away. We then waited anxiously while we went through the screening process. It was a couple weeks later when we learned that we were the first to request ICI.INSURANCE.”



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Together, with a team of three core people and an outside consultant, ICI started working on the .INSURANCE transition in June of 2016. Since the team was unsure how the process would work, and what outcome it would yield, they kept the news of the agency's new domain quiet for a few months.

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although Murry admits that branding was the foremost priority for making the switch – once he learned about the security requirements, it made the .INSURANCE offering even more appealing.

With the assistance of Cloud Totally, CHOOSE Networks, and RSM Marketing, ICI switched its website address by redirecting the old .COM and pointing it to the new .INSURANCE domain name. The website is currently hosted on a shared server and ICI is working to migrate its platform to a dedicated server, as upgrading the encryption level is a priority.

“We weren't aware of the security requirements until after we made the switch. Fortunately, our trusted IT vendors were able to make the necessary changes to comply with the requirements,” said Murry.

As soon as the new email addresses were active, ICI also redirected all incoming emails being sent to ICBLUESKIES.com to the new domains, using an alias. While clients and vendors can still email the old domain, all replies come from the new ICI.INSURANCE domain. Staff has also inserted notices in their signature lines of emails about the new email address and ICI's new website address. Murry anticipates they will keep the old email addresses and website live for at least another twelve months before shutting them down completely.

MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

Murry has big plans for ICI branding in the next year to include an emphasis on digital marketing. The agency's plans include redesigning a new website in the next few months and increasing social media efforts. Search engine optimization remains top-of-mind, so they continue to work on concerted efforts to link marketing with the new domain.

Along with digital marketing, new business cards, letterhead and stationary were immediately ordered to reflect the new email and website addresses, to help get the word out.

LESSONS LEARNED

In total, Murry estimates ICI has spent approximately \$8,000 to date on the move to .INSURANCE – an investment that's worthwhile to enhance the branding and the image of the company.

“The switch has definitely been worthwhile. We've received several compliments from our clients who like the new name,” said Murry.

Although Murry admits they have encountered some issues sending emails from the new domain, they are working on solutions.

“Many of our clients' and carriers' servers don't recognize the new .INSURANCE domain yet, and therefore our emails aren't going through. We've tried to take a proactive approach and contact their IT departments and request that they add or allow our new domain. It's worked to some extent, but it's far from perfect.”

