

CLOUDINARY DELIVERS HOLISTIC PRESCRIPTION TO MINDBODYGREEN FOR MANAGING IMAGE-HEAVY WEB DESIGN

Wellness Website Improves User Experience by Optimizing Images and Reducing Bandwidth Demands

ROI	↓ 75%	Image Serving Costs	↓ 60%	Page Weight	↓ 20%	Manpower Required
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mindbodygreen is a digital media brand dedicated to health and wellness. The company's website bring together leaders in the wellness world, best-selling authors, fitness experts, trusted healers, pioneering doctors, top chefs, celebrities and top-tier journalists to provide readers fresh, expert content and tools to help them live healthy, happy lives. The company was founded in 2009 and is headquartered in Brooklyn, N.Y.



The Challenge: Infrastructure Demands Takes Focus Away from Core Business

mindbodygreen's website has more than 12 million unique visitors each month, with about 55 percent of them accessing the site from mobile devices. In early 2015, the company began the process of rebranding, which included an art-directed, image-heavy redesign of its website.

"If you analyzed our home page across multiple breakpoints, we had more than 20 different aspect ratios we needed to support," said Tim Glenister, mindbodygreen's CTO. "We had standard crops to make for each aspect ratio, then we would have to resize each image accordingly. This really put the pressure on our editorial team, and it was taking up too much of their time per article."

The new design also used a lot more bandwidth than expected, as the site was serving between 25 million and 35 million pages a month. “The bandwidth dedicated to serving image content was skyrocketing because our visitors were consuming more images, especially our mobile users,” Glenister added.

The Cloudinary Solution: Fast Implementation and Instant Impact

About a month after launching the redesign of the mindbodygreen website, Glenister and his team realized the process they were using – which included Amazon CloudFront for serving static images – was going to be unsustainable in the long run because it was so time consuming for the editorial team.

They quickly started looking for solutions that would enable them to crop images on the fly, and examining how other image-heavy websites handled their image transformation. This search led them to Gawker’s website, where they dug into the source code and discovered the unique URLs produced by Cloudinary.

After reaching out to Cloudinary, mindbodygreen set up a trial of the solution and in less than a week was running it in production. “Implementing the basic Cloudinary code took us less than a day,” Glenister said, adding that they were able to set up the source URLs so that Cloudinary could pull images off their servers. “Within a couple of weeks, we were using Cloudinary to transform all our site images, and implemented the flags and filters we needed to optimize our bandwidth.”

With Cloudinary, mindbodygreen can update the images for its 25,000 articles on-the-fly, optimizing them for any device and any resolution used by visitors. “We are using lazy loading, DPR parameters, and HTML picture tags with polyfill, which enables us to serve retina images to retina devices and standard images to other devices,” he said.

Doing other transformations to the images, such as overlays, are much easier too, with Cloudinary, Glenister said. For example, Cloudinary enables conditional transformations that allow a logo overlay to be adjusted as a percentage of the image size, depending on the pixel width of the image. “We need to create three different images, over three different break points – requiring us to swap out images, which would have been challenging,” he explained. “With Cloudinary we can do this with a single URL, and apply it to every image in our library, adding a transformation through code that could be live on our site the next day. Without Cloudinary, it would take several days to engineer this process.”

Glenister added that with Cloudinary, mindbodygreen also can easily conduct A/B tests, in conjunction with Optimize.ly, to see what design works best. “To visually update the site with just code, versus having to change the underlying assets has been huge for the engineering and creative team. It has allowed us test creative concepts in real-time that would not have been possible before,” he noted.

The Results: An Improved User Experience Coupled with Significant Cost, Time and Bandwidth Savings

The time and cost savings related to the move to Cloudinary were almost instantaneous. In just the first month, mindbodygreen was able to drop its image serving costs by 75 percent, while reducing page load by over 33 percent and page weight by 60 percent on average across devices.

“We’re in a game where we need our users to have a great experience with our content, especially on mobile devices,” Glenister said. “Before we used Cloudinary, we had a site that was serving a lot of images that were not appropriately sized, and that was slowing down the user experience and using up their bandwidth.”

The Cloudinary solution enables mindbodygreen’s small team of about 30 individuals to be agile and move quickly, yet still have a strong brand based on the visual design the creative team envisions. Glenister estimates that the company is saving more than 400 minutes a week – almost a full day of work for a single person – by eliminating the manual processes related to image transformations.

“It’s hard to get any simpler than Cloudinary. In fact, it was almost scary how easy it was – we thought we had screwed something up,” Glenister concluded. “We can now manage our assets more effectively with the Cloudinary solution, and we can play around with transformations and overlays to see how things react, since we’re only manipulating URLs. Cloudinary is indispensable to us.”

HOW CAN YOU WIN WITH CLOUDINARY

As the leading cloud-based image and video management solution on the market today, Cloudinary is the natural choice for any company wanting to upload, store, manipulate, optimize and deliver images and videos efficiently and effectively.

IMAGE UPLOAD

Upload any file to the cloud

Upload any image type (JPG, PNG, Animated GIF, PSD, WebP, JPEG-XR, SVG and others). Upload videos, PDF and Office documents, and any other file type.

Upload from any source

Use Cloudinary's image API to upload files from your back-end application. Support uploading directly from your visitors' browsers, iOS or Android mobile apps without any server-side component. Alternatively, fetch images in realtime using URLs from around the web.

Upload at any scale

Upload anywhere from a few images to millions of images a day. Cloudinary takes care of your upload scale with zero hassle and no headaches.

Upload files any way you want it

Cloudinary offers secure upload API, interactive manual uploads and customizable upload widgets you can embed in your website or mobile app.

CLOUD STORAGE

Your files are stored safely in the cloud

With Cloudinary your images are stored in a highly available, redundant, cloud-based persistent storage, with revision tracking and automatic backup.

Store as many files as you need

Cloudinary allows you to store anywhere from a few files to millions of files, from a few bytes to many Terabytes and more.

Store the files wherever you need it

Leverage Cloudinary's internal storage mechanisms or your own AWS S3 bucket for storage. Alternatively, you can keep utilizing your existing storage solution and have your files manipulated on-the-fly from their original location.

POWERFUL ADMINISTRATION

Web-based management console

Gain important insights on your images with usage reports, in-depth analytics and actionable advice. Setup and tweak every aspect of your image pipeline's behavior. Assign role-based access to all your team members.

Online media management

Use Cloudinary's online web interface to interactively manage your media library wherever you are. Sift through your images with powerful browsing and advanced searching. Moderate your images manually or automatically. Tag your images or organize them in folders and much more.

Administrative API

Use RESTful APIs to simplify and speed-up your move to the cloud. Automate all your image management and house-keeping. Cloudinary's SDKs offer streamlined integration for your specific development framework.

IMAGE MANIPULATIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

On-the-fly image transformations with a URL-based API. Upload a full-sized image once and let Cloudinary generate different sized image versions from the original, on-the-fly or in advance. Manipulate your images dynamically to perfectly fit your graphic design across every device and resolution.

Images are processed ultra fast in the cloud, with no local software installation or ongoing maintenance required.