



# MERINO LAMINATES

## Case Study

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**Industry :**  
Surface Solution-Decorative Laminates

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# OVERVIEW

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Merino Laminates began its journey in the year 1974 with the launch of plywood followed by high pressure laminates in the year 1981.

With constant diversification and market adaptation, Merino has successfully marked its heritage in the laminates & panel industry.



Being an umbrella over various products from Interior Architectural Designs to Food and Agro supplies, Merino group has its presence over 80 countries spanning across 5 continents.

Being one of the top 5 leaders around the world in laminates, Merino group has always placed product quality and customer experience as their top priority. Throughout its journey from an offline to an aggressively online digital brand, Merino has committed itself to solving the customer problems and enhancing their overall experience regarding the brand and its products.

In their journey to amplify the digital services available, Merino pondered over a solution to facilitate a comfortable approach to the users to review their laminates rather than visiting the actual physical stores. Their quest to resolve this requirement led to their partnership with DaveAI.

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“Technology is at the forefront of any measure taken these days and the future of products is over the online space. We are committed to aggressively develop our brand online by providing new technology to explore and understand the product for our users.

In this regard, we have partnered with DaveAI to develop one of a kind visualizer to help users visualize the product in an effective way.”

- Bhavesh Jhalani , Head Digital Marketing, Merino  
Group

## WHY ?

A recent survey in the year 2020 by PYMTNS stated that nearly 36% of the total consumers in the US are purchasing products online compared to 28% in the beginning of the year.

A research conducted by team DaveAI over a more local demographic resulted in 96% of the respondents shopping online instead of physical shopping thereby supporting the rising demand for online shopping.

With the increase in the number of people purchasing online, brands are strengthening their foot in the online playfield.

Considering the current requirement of the customers to visit a nearby physical store to review the laminate in an actual setting, Merino Laminates began to brainstorm the possibilities to enable real time visualization of the laminates with customized background settings at the comfort of the user's home.

With the present online avenues and websites offering a 2D picture of the product, a majority of the customers remained unsatisfied because of the lack of real time visualization of the product for a better overview. Merino therefore aimed to provide the customers with **enhanced discovery experience** and **qualified product recommendations** based on their preferences.

## **WHEN ?**

After the ideation and conceptualization of the visualizer preceded by thorough research of customer behavior patterns, a **3D visualizer** was deployed for Merino Laminates in the year 2020.

# WHAT ?

Merino Laminates being an established front-runner with a strong native as well as international presence in laminate and interior architectures, is always diligent in maintaining a deep-rooted understanding of the customer. To ensure an empathetic approach towards their customers, they worked closely with the architecture as well as the influencer ecosystem. Analyzing the current requirement for Merino to enable a much simpler avenue to customize the laminates without the need to go to the actual store, team DaveAI proposed an AI assisted visualizer to be the optimum solution owing to its capability to allow the users manifest and explore various textures and designs that matches their preference.

Along with the visualization of the products/laminates in **customized 3D concept rooms**, the visualizer is also integrated with AI and ML to provide **personalized product recommendations** to the customers.

Its intelligent adaptability also allowed Merino to update the latest catalogue through the backend without any changes to the existing layers.

## HOW ?

Merino laminates has integrated a 3D visualizer on their official website that enables the users to customize the virtual landscape with personalized combinations of the laminate designs available in the catalogue. The users can apply various designs and textures of the laminates onto the surface in concept areas to discover the laminates in an actual room setting.

# BREAKTHROUGHS

With the deployment of AI assisted visualizer, DaveAI assisted Merino Laminates in reaching a benchmark of -

**30000+**

customers exploring the visualizer for various combinations of the laminates.

**1000+**

qualified lead enquiries with a constant rise in the rate of enquiries.

# TECHKNOWLEDGE

The integration of cutting edge visualizer technology which focuses on the realism and clarity of the products is the unique feature of the project. Emphasis has been laid on the clarity and color fidelity of the products of Merino Laminates. The most persistent complication with visualizers is their inability to recreate the accurate real time colours and patterns of the products. The programs which had this capability however, required high-end computers with specialized hardware.

DaveAI's target was to be able to provide the visualizer to a large set of audience including mobile or tab users, with the primary focus on lower end laptop and desktop users.

DaveAI therefore employed its **patent pending technology** which optimizes both the illumination and color realism but works on hardware with low specifications thereby improving the spectrum of usage.

The visualizer also facilitates quick update of the catalogue by Merino Laminates without any changes to the existing layers and visuals through the incorporation of two pieces of technologies-

- Intelligent data layer allowing the creation of a pipeline of processes.
- Patent pending baking and rendering technology which facilitates the automation of the creation of visualizer assets in a scalable fashion while maintaining the realism.

The second aspect of the project is the data platform which ingests a large amount of data about the usage patterns of the users enabling Merino Laminates to understand what a customer is looking for and which designs are trending and thereby modify the catalogue and suggestions.

# THE JOURNEY

DaveAI is working with Merino Laminates right from early 2018 with the prime motive of understanding customer's interaction with brands in physical spaces and conceptualizing a solution to augment their experience.

Enhancing customer experience being the mutual goal for both Merino Laminates and DaveAI, the conceptualization of the 3D web visualizer established. A visualizer empowers the customers to experience the actual setting of the laminates instantaneously in **custom built 3D concept rooms** which helps them apply the laminates to various surfaces like wall cladding, furniture and other surfaces. Merino Laminates being an established brand has more than 500 designs with different finishes and over 20 product categories to choose from.

The AI assisted visualizer has incorporated an intelligent pipeline system to seamlessly integrate these numerous designs into the website which would otherwise be both a time as well as resource demanding task. The end objective of improving this discovery experience is to help the customers make qualified purchase decisions faster. Inclusive of both these phases of project, DaveAI targets to improve the overall **qualified lead generation rate by 30%** and more.

## **JOURNEY AHEAD**

One of the key business metrics DaveAI tries to develop as a visual AI platform is improvement in lead qualification. With an effort to positively remove any gaps in the experience the brand offers to the customer, DaveAI is constantly working to improve the KPI's of the associate brands in terms of number of leads digitally generated over a targeted percentage.

The first phase of the Merino project being the visualizer to augment the customer's discovery experience, the second phase of the project comprises incorporating an AI assisted affinity engine to assist the customers in product recommendations based on their requirements. Based on the customer interactions, the affinity engine gathers valuable insights regarding the user and delivers actionable data to the company. This phase of the project inclines towards enabling Merino Laminates to sell an optimum product mix to its customers & to generate maximum value based on their requirements and potential to spend.

It has been a constant learning curve working as the technological partner with Merino and we hope to endeavor success in the long journey ahead.

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