

# Mecum Auctions Fuels Enhanced Digital Experiences With Clouinary



**INDUSTRY**  
Automotive

**SIZE**  
500 employees

**HEADQUARTERS**  
Walworth, Wisconsin

Over **2,000 working hours saved** via automated image uploading process

Optimized images delivered for online advertising in **"1/100th of the time"**

**2x** faster page load times



## ABOUT

### World's largest online and live premium vehicle auctioneer

For many, the purchase of a dream car or motorcycle is the culmination of a life's dream. The satisfaction of being behind the wheel of a rare collectible that has enchanted you since youth can not be fully appreciated until you've done it yourself.

As seen in thrilling live auctions on MotorTrend TV, Mecum Auctions makes their customers' dream of dream car ownership a reality. By bringing the world's leading automotive experts together with the best photographers, web developers, videographers, content creators, advertising specialists, and more,





Mecum delivers nothing less than the highest quality shopping experience to collectors every time. “We sell cars ranging in value from \$10,000 to \$10 million plus anything that has any kind of collectible value,” says IT Director, Cade Cannon, adding, “there’s something for everyone at one of our events and there’s no collector car auction house in the world that sells more cars than Mecum.”

## THE CHALLENGE

# Retiring the Old Image Retrieval Method

Captivating, stylish imagery is at the core of the Mecum purchasing experience. From its wildly popular televised auctions to the beautiful automotive photography on its website, images must attract prospective buyers, they must also be accurate and vivid enough to capture and keep the attention of highly informed and discerning buyers who are prepared to bid serious money for the 30,000 cars and bikes that Mecum offers each year. Presently, Mecum hosts more than two million high-quality unique images and counting, which, as Cannon says, “requires a huge amount of back-end excellence.”

The image creation and management process starts with its team of professional photographers who shoot 100s of photos for each car, which are then used to produce everything from digital and print catalogs, to email marketing and web content. All images are grouped by auction, and then by individual lot. As this collection of images grew, so did the level of cataloging complexity and image location – tasks that before Cloudinary, were performed manually.

Mecum’s legacy systems couldn’t handle this enormous scale and image retrieval in particular had become nearly impossible. As Cannon explains, “It had started becoming much harder to, say, find a two-year old picture of a specific cherry-red Corvette for a marketing brochure. We ended up relying too much on one person in our production team with a great memory who could usually find what we needed. But if they were busy or out, this method obviously doesn’t scale!”

Other ongoing media management challenges were, according to Cannon. “Several manual tasks had to happen in order for us to produce even the bare minimum on the site. Add to that getting the right size and the right format for the right device, image handling was becoming more and more expensive for the company in terms of both hardware and people’s time.”

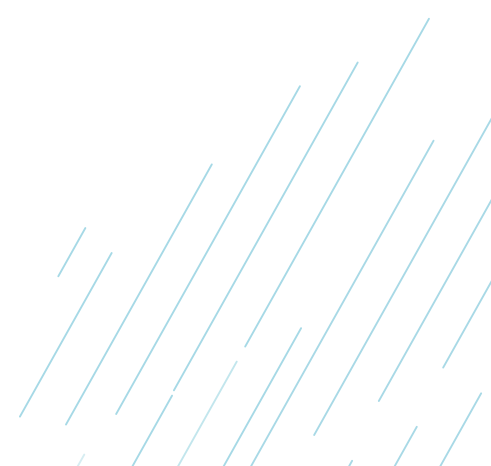
## THE CLOUDINARY SOLUTION

# Classic Cars Deserve a Modern DAM

When it decided to refresh its website, Mecum recognized that the time to optimize image retrieval and other media management processes and modernize its digital asset management (DAM) system had come. Mecum turned to its implementation partner, [Americaneagle.com](https://www.americaneagle.com), for advice on which solution would best solve their image and video management challenges, they recommended Cloudinary’s DAM to meet its very unique set of visual media requirements.

As Cannon points out, “Every single one of our products is genuinely unique. In our business we can’t use stock photos, we need real photos to show the details of each individual vehicle. These vehicles are often so rare that even the manufacturer has long since stopped having any pictures of them. We worried that a traditional DAM might not work for us, because we don’t have repeatable SKUs.”

Any new DAM would also have to be seamlessly integrated with Mecum’s headless solution that includes WordPress VIP and Vercel. A developer by trade, Cannon was attracted to how everything Cloudinary does is written on top of modern APIs.



“Since we have fully custom tools, we weren’t sure if we would be able to integrate the way we wanted and Cloudinary’s API-first approach meant that we could build a seamless solution!”

—Cade Cannon, IT Director, Mecum Auctions



“We're a big company in terms of our footprint, but we don't have armies of resources we can throw at problems. Being smart and being agile with our resources is to our advantage, and knowing that we are now able to align our resources with things that are adding value to the company or adding value to our customers – that's our sweet spot, and Cloudinary allows us to do that.”

—Cade Cannon, IT Director, Mecum Auctions



## THE RESULTS

# 'The Value Add Is Just Tremendous'

Cloudinary's ability to solve image retrieval and optimization headaches has been nothing short of transformational, saving at least 300+ full-time employee days — effectively a full year — in image uploading time alone.

As Cannon explains, "With the old website, we were using the decades-old ImageMagick to create different sized optimized photos for mobile, tablet and desktop, which took in total about 10 seconds per image. Now, we just upload the raw images and Cloudinary does that processing automatically. Marketing staff no longer has to generate specific sized images for ad creative and designers aren't wasting their time trying to find specific media. It also means web pages load much faster, which really improves the customer experience."

Mecum is also benefiting from Cloudinary's extensive range of built-in transformations, especially its automatic quality transformation (`q_auto`) and optimal image format (`f_auto`) parameters. This was a huge boon to Mecum's marketing team which wanted a way to speed up the process of optimizing images for Google Display Ads. As Cannon enthused: "They were able to get their Google Ads campaign kicked off in 1/100th of the time it would have taken if they had optimized the images manually."

Mecum stakeholders are also seeing the benefits. Cloudinary has made it easy to produce attractive printed form image collections for senior management and to share content with important partners like MotorTrend.

Cloudinary's DAM is also driving operational improvements by replacing an outdated on-prem image storage workflow. Previously multiple servers had been permanently allocated to this one production task. Having local only access restricted remote production due to limitations of cumbersome VPN access.

Next on Mecum's roadmap is working with Cloudinary's APIs to automate the processes around user-generated content (UGC). Today when a consignor, or seller, wants to publish their car's photos on Mecum's site, they have to send images by email. The production team needs to do considerable manual work including assessing the quality of the images, finding the sender's email address and matching it up to the car. Mecum is integrating Cloudinary into a portal-based process, so when a user uploads photos they appear in a "pending images" tab. When someone on the production team validates them, it triggers the API approvals process and the images are published.

As Cannon explained, “Making this a customer portal-driven process using Cloudinary’s APIs is where we’re headed. This will free up our photos team to spend more time on value-add activity, like adding categories as opposed to those resources spending time trying to figure out which lot photos belong to. It just makes tons of sense for us and for the customer”

For Cade, summing up the value-add he gets with Cloudinary is simple, “On a scale of one to a 10, it’s a no-brainer—I’d give Cloudinary a 10. If you compare the old website with what we have now it’s the difference between night and day, the value add is just tremendous. There’s no question at all that, for us, this is an incredibly valuable solution.”



## About Cloudinary

Cloudinary is the image and video technology platform that enables the world’s most engaging brands to deliver transformative visual experiences at global scale. More than 1.5 million users and 10,000 customers, including Apartment Therapy, Bleacher Report, Bombas, Grubhub, Hinge, NBC, Mediavine, Minted, Paul Smith and Peloton, rely on Cloudinary to bring their campaigns, apps and sites to life. With the world’s most powerful image and video APIs backed by industry-leading artificial intelligence and patented technology, Cloudinary offers a single source of truth for brands to manage, transform, optimize, and deliver visual experiences at scale. As a result, the most engaging brands across all industries are seeing up to a **203% ROI using Cloudinary** with benefits including faster time to market, higher user satisfaction and increased engagement and conversions.

For more information, visit [www.cloudinary.com](http://www.cloudinary.com).

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