

CASE STUDY



CAE launches multiple ecommerce storefronts in record time

How the global leader in training and operational support solutions in civil aviation, defense and security, and healthcare set up multiple eCommerce sites in a highly regulated field.

Introduction

CAE is on a mission. As a global leader in simulation technology and training for complex industries, the company recognizes the need for bold digital transformation.

In 2020, CAE decided to pursue a unified eCommerce strategy with goals identified to increase efficiencies, improve time-to-market, and gain scalability for their evolving needs. The adoption of eCommerce bolstered CAE's digitally immersive offerings, adding yet another stream to support revenue growth and customer needs.

CAE targeted a marketplace model and set out to launch multiple storefronts for the needs of its different business units. To ensure success, the company conducted a detailed review and study of the major eCommerce platform providers - and selected VTEX.

VTEX's fully integrated capabilities across commerce, marketplace, and order management stood out, expertly delivered with Pivotree as the implementation partner.

What followed next was a project for the record books.

About CAE

- CAE is a high technology company, at the leading edge of digital immersion, providing solutions to make the world a safer place.
- Backed by a record of 75 years of industry firsts, we continue to reimagine the customer experience and revolutionize training and operational support solutions in civil aviation, defense and security, and healthcare.
- We have the broadest global presence in our industry, with more than 13,000 employees, 180 sites, and training locations in over 35 countries.



Assessing the Challenge

CAE wanted a more intuitive and seamless customer experience to be the core of its digital transformation. To kick-off the initiative, the company identified a rapid launch of three eCommerce sites:

Simhub is a direct-to-business, customer service portal for any simulator aftermarket requirements. Customers can buy new or replacement flight simulator parts and services through CAE, ensuring a seamless customer journey. This storefront is used externally and internally, creating efficiencies for both customer segments.

Business Aviation Learning. Through Business Aviation Learning, CAE offers business aviation pilots to undertake aircraft-specific e-learning courseware which allows them to keep abreast on all general operating requirements. These courses can be purchased on-demand and support B2B, B2C, B2B2C models.

Medical Skills Trainer. This site offers medical training products to healthcare professionals, which allows them to simulate real-world clinical experiences.

The initiative included migrating the existing online store from CAE's proprietary system to VTEX. The new platform addressed some legacy issues and provided the required stability for modern commerce requirements.

Considering CAE's global presence and diverse product offerings, the company plans to further optimize its eCommerce capabilities, meeting the customers right where they are!

Setting the Framework

Rapid implementation wasn't the only challenge. CAE's portfolio is complex, which translates to different rules for each eCommerce business. Each site would need to account for nuances like geographic restrictions, IP blocking, regulatory requirements, and legal compliance – along with purchase pre-requisites, checking users against denied person lists, and vetoes.

VTEX knew it was time to look beyond a traditional approach to solution architecture. Pivotree's Experience Strategy group worked closely with VTEX to create a framework focused on the desired outcomes, not held back by pre-existing rules or constraints.

Specifically, Pivotree partnered with the customer at the very beginning of the engagement to conduct design thinking sessions with key stakeholders, develop empathy maps, and document customer journeys with their associated desired business outcomes. In conjunction with this process, Pivotree worked with the customer to build a capability map to capture the current state of each business unit and the functionality required for each business unit.

Additionally, value modeling was employed to identify the financial benefits of focusing on particular capabilities to develop in support of the user journeys that had the greatest business impact. This strategy enabled Pivotree to implement solutions quickly, capturing the vital product attributes most critical to the initial release.



Pivotree played a crucial role in advancing this strategy through CAE's culture. At every step, Pivotree and VTEX aligned with CAE's key stakeholders to deliver the insights they needed to make quick, strategic decisions.

Putting Things in Motion

The next challenge was to define the first project's scope – and with no previous site as a guide, CAE faced a blank slate and new terrain.

According to Alfonso Suarez, Solution Architect at VTEX, "Because the websites that are part of this digital transformation were new, the CAE team had the opportunity to focus on the customer journey, as well as the details that lead to higher conversions and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, when you have a brand-new business model, there is no proven conversion funnel to maintain, pages to migrate, or processes to replicate. Anything beyond the basic action of selling the product is adjustable."

tenant SaaS solution, CAE would benefit from the same flexibility and stability of AWS – which helps simplify decisions regarding infrastructure.

Yet even with a streamlined approach, there were still a myriad of moving parts to manage. That's where the Program Team made a big impact. This group provided a constant view of both business and technical expertise across the full program, guided by Pivotree, a Lead Program Architect and Lead Business Consultant.

Pivotree made sure that the technical solutions were re-used and common solutions were applied across all sites. They utilized prior site implementation expertise to drive technical efficiencies and minimize technical debt where possible.

Similarly, the Lead Business Consultant ensured that project teams took advantage of problems solved during prior implementations by re-applying common logic and implementing improvements to drive even better results.



He added, "It's an exciting place to start, but it also requires that extra mile to deliver the results while removing risks."

Thankfully, VTEX's architecture can offer quick go-lives and complete customization, eliminating traditional sources of delay. Pivotree leveraged this flexibility to develop a minimum viable product (MVP).

Another key advantage is that the entire VTEX platform is built on Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud architecture. Due to it being a true multi-

Together, the roles worked to make sure that complex business and technical solutions were addressed in common ways to gain efficiency across multiple projects. The leaders also provided guidance and structure for the customer and project teams whenever needed.

Adhering to High Standards

With the scope defined, the project kicked off quickly. But there was still a significant hurdle to overcome: compliance.



Because CAE's sites serve highly regulated fields, the customer vetting process (i.e., purchase flows) is complex. The requirements also vary between segments, so the team had to revisit the framework for each site.

"It would be easy to say, 'this is still CAE, so you can copy the processes.' But the reality is that processes should be defined to meet each BU's needs," explained Alain Prosper, Senior Business Consultant at Pivotree. "Throw in the fact that CAE operates within an aerospace and military construct, and the level of required security is significant."

Prosper added, "We took the time to granularly understand the purchase flows for every business unit – which is not as much about complexity as it is a process of being meticulous and thorough."

As they would soon see, the effort paid off.

Measuring Success

This project has already been fruitful – spanning advisory services, strategy, design, and rapid implementation.

Throughout the process, CAE has greatly benefited from the Pivotree/VTEX partnership and deep expertise, each with more than 20 years of experience in the eCommerce landscape.

VTEX has continued uncovering ways to enable CAE's requests inside its architecture, whether from the solution's core functionality or specific customizations built by the internal team. Some functionality requests were already on VTEX's pipeline. But in the case of business-specific needs, Pivotree and VTEX worked together to create whatever component CAE required.

"This is a testament to seamless collaboration and the impact of our Program Team," explained Prosper. "Our objective is always to present a united front, where the client sees us as 'the development team that helps us tackle problems.'"

Constant communication is a crucial component of their success, with regular touchpoints and high levels of visibility. This translates to a permanently open conversation – and a digital transformation initiative that continues to stay on track.

The Journey Continues

CAE's digital transformation is an iterative process and will remain at the forefront of every project. Upcoming stages may include synergies between websites or refining the customer experience within the CAE ecosystem. Built on AWS cloud, the infrastructure is flexible and scalable to handle whatever comes next.

The project journey has also included a geofencing capability, as well as a robust system for data handling and other security features. VTEX has risen to each challenge, elevating its capabilities and keeping its promises for every go live.

Ultimately, the partnership between the three companies has empowered CAE to move from a business with almost no online presence to a solid eCommerce enterprise.

Their journey stands out as a lesson for those pursuing compliance in online retail – and a success story of how a legacy company with a rich history can become a [true digital leader](#).

When we first met with CAE, we saw that they relied heavily on manual, legacy processes. They are clearly the experts in their business. But as eCommerce experts, we were able to expose the full picture and guide them toward the right improvements. Our team's outstanding VTEX capabilities, coupled with our deep understanding of today's rapidly evolving digital commerce landscape, made this the perfect partnership for CAE's digital transformation journey.

- Sarah Kirk-Douglas
VP Marketing, Pivotree



VTEX's empowered marketplace business model is becoming the go-to-market strategy for many large enterprises. We are excited to work alongside our partners at Pivotree to support CAE in creating best-in-class digital customer experiences and help accelerate their bold digital strategy.

- Amit Shah
Chief Strategy Officer & U.S.
General Manager, VTEX



Pivotree assisted CAE from discovery to delivery in the integration of our global eCommerce ecosystem. Once the program required that we accelerate time-to-market, which meant to tackle 3 storefronts concurrently, Pivotree quickly ramped-up the project delivery teams and successfully launched the 3 storefronts within the same month. Another trait of the excellent relationship was that the Pivotree resources blended with CAE resources to form unified product squads. The synergies established were undeniably a success factor for the program which also represented one of the company's core value; One CAE.

- Alain C. Courville
eCommerce Product Strategist
CAE

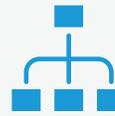


Results



Record time-to-market

CAE implemented five digital eCommerce websites in 8 months.



Multiple business models on one platform

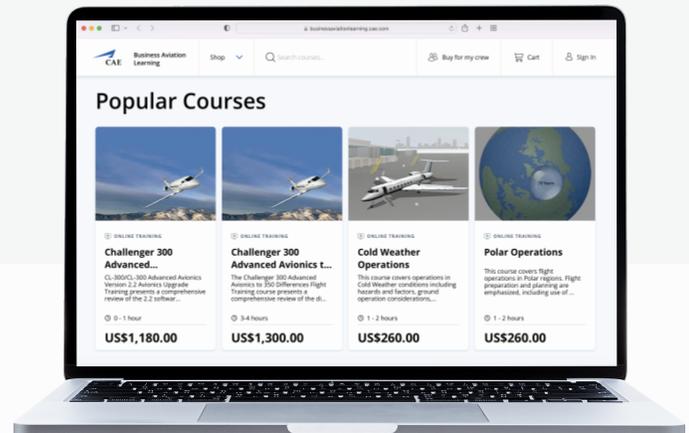
VTEX and Pivotree power digital eCommerce sites, which gained native out-of-the-box B2C, B2B, B2B2C, and B2B2B capabilities.

The entire VTEX platform is built on AWS cloud architecture.



Bold plans

Considering CAE's numerous locations, network of partners and solutions offering, the company has plans to continue to grow its eCommerce ecosystem.



For more information, please visit
www.pivotree.com, or contact
sales@pivotree.com