

A person wearing a vibrant red jacket is shown from the side, holding a silver smartphone in their right hand. They are also carrying a large, open red shopping bag and a beige quilted handbag. The background is a soft, out-of-focus gradient of orange and red. The overall scene suggests a modern retail or e-commerce environment.

E-COMMERCE, ON YOUR OWN TERMS

A traditional retail brand shouldn't mean an old-fashioned e-commerce experience, even if it takes one of the largest implementations of its kind to change it.

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A BRAND WITH PROMISE

Our client was something of a niche retail brand — with an enormous heritage and reputation, yet in order to exploit the opportunities in an increasingly online world, they needed to embark on a digitization journey.

The digitization program was extensive and touched many parts of the company operations. Already drawn up was a high-level list of 20 different areas that would put the brand firmly on its digital transformation journey. At the top of the list was perhaps the most business-critical project of all — updating the e-commerce platform — and that is where we began.

TIME TO TAKE CONTROL

The first step was to replace their legacy e-commerce platform with a new one. The reason for this re-platforming was that our client wanted an e-commerce journey that leveraged the latest technology to bring the best possible customer experience. They wanted to respond to customer insight with personalized content and offer best-in-class customer service, and a consistent experience across every channel in every global market.

They knew that they could only achieve this if they had control over the whole e-commerce journey. It was clear that in order to gain control, they would need to move away from a third-party system and build their own cloud infrastructure. We discussed their needs at length and explained that it was feasible, but this would be one of the biggest and most complex Azure e-commerce implementations the industry has seen.

BREAKTHROUGH

To have control over the entire customer experience, they had to move to a cloud environment. This would mean one of the largest Azure implementations ever considered.

80 INTEGRATIONS IN TWO YEARS

E-commerce is not just about the website: the system would stretch from end-user touchpoints to the warehouse and fulfilment logistics, cutting across multiple layers and technologies.

We had more than 30 third-party products to integrate in our solution, most of which had poorly written agreements and limited liabilities and were posing a major threat to our launch date. We also had to integrate with customer legacy systems which were managed by an incumbent vendor, which presented a major risk in alignment to program goals. All in all, more than 80 integrations had to be made.

Achieving performance benchmarks required a fine balance of optimizing infrastructure costs and application-level performances. There was a **17,000** concurrent user load and **100,000** product updates to be inducted into the system every day. Throughout this time, **99.99%** availability had to be maintained.

A photograph of a man with glasses and a young boy. The man is smiling and holding a credit card. The boy is leaning over his shoulder, looking at the card. They are both looking at the card with interest.

A FLEXIBLE FUTURE

It was an enormous task; but less than two years after the original meeting, the system was live; and the end customers enjoyed a faster, smarter, and more engaging experience than ever before. And our client was finally in control of the whole process.

Another advantage of the in-house controlled e-commerce platform was its flexibility. Although the platform was initially rolled out to the UK and Europe, we knew it would be much easier to roll out to other geographical markets when required. The brand's potential would only be realised through growth; so along with driving higher business levels through improved customer experience and service, the brand needed the flexibility to spread its wings and open up new markets around the world.

This flexibility also enabled experimentation with advanced multi-channel features; for example, enabling cross-channel product returns and 'click and collect' for extra customer convenience.

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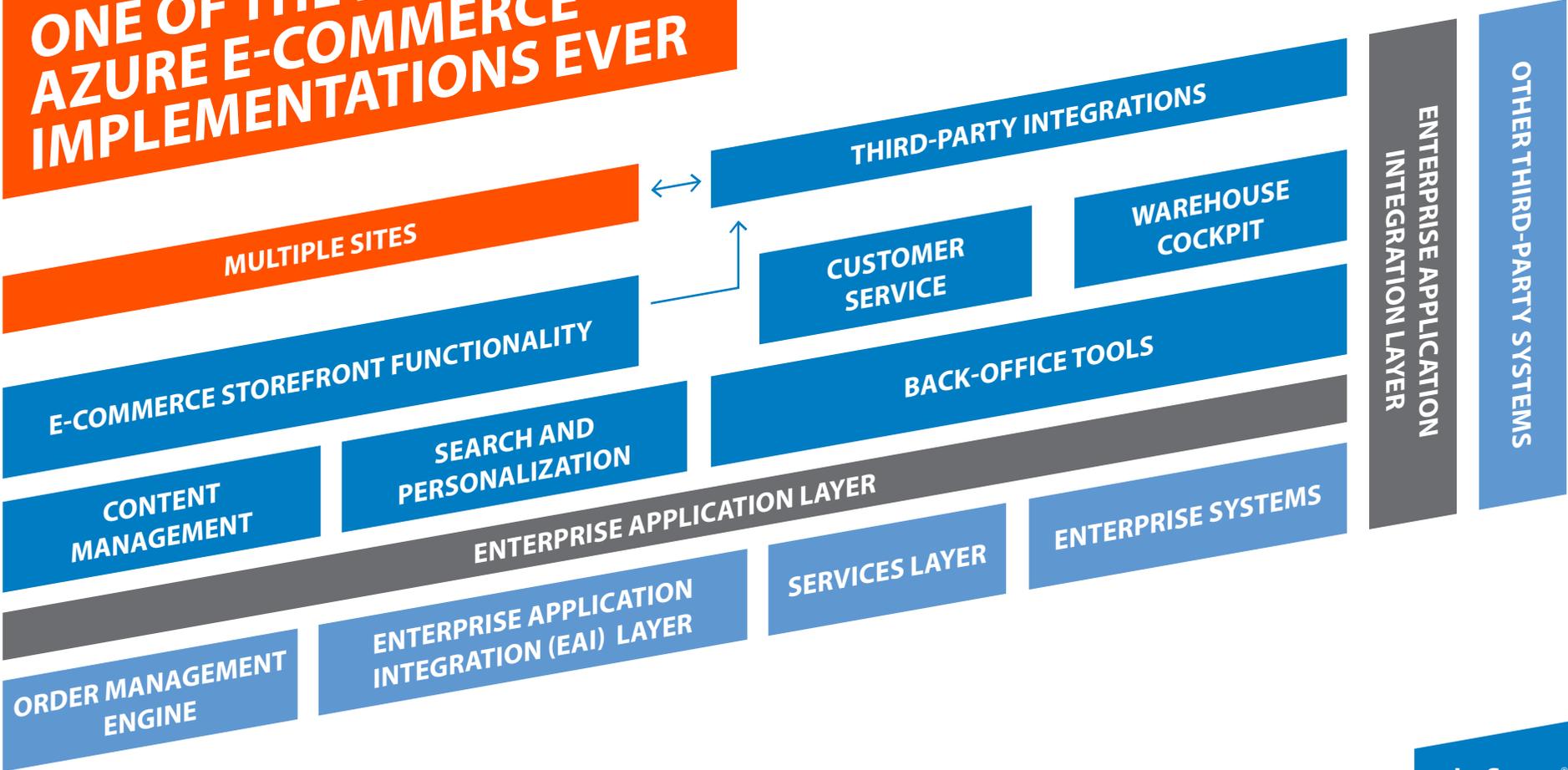
IN THE PINK ON BLACK FRIDAY

Given the complexity of the challenge, we knew there was a risk of overrunning. In the early stages, information gathering took longer than expected, and consensus / approval times were delayed. There were even last-minute user experience design (UX) changes from the client that threatened to derail the timing of the project. Despite these difficulties and the sheer size of the implementation, we met all our deadlines; and the new platform was operational in time for the holiday season in 2017.

The acid test was the first Black Friday, when the year's highest levels of online activity were expected. The system came through the Black Friday - Cyber Monday weekend without incident and traded 20 percent more than originally forecasted.



ONE OF THE LARGEST AZURE E-COMMERCE IMPLEMENTATIONS EVER



**OUR PLATFORM
TRADED**

20%

**MORE THAN
ORIGINAL BLACK
FRIDAY FORECAST,
WITHOUT INCIDENT**

80+

**INTEGRATIONS
DELIVERED
WITHOUT
DISRUPTION**

Our client wanted an e-commerce journey that provided a seamless customer experience. They could only achieve this if they had control over their entire journey. Thus ensued one of the biggest and most complex Azure e-commerce implementations of the industry.

**WE DID THIS FOR
THEM. WE CAN
DO IT FOR YOU.**

Find out more about how we can put you in control of your e-commerce. Reach out to us at askus@infosys.com

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