

## Case Studies

Primary Case Study Focus: [Microsoft Visual Studio 6.0](#)

### Transat A.T.

#### ***Cactus Communications Uses Microsoft Solutions Framework (MSF) to Build Air Transat's Vacation Web Site***

##### CASE STUDY

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[Back to Previous Page](#)

***Air Transat wanted a vacation Web site that would appeal to its customers. Their vision was to be the first in the field to provide online travel accommodations. The company realized if they were to be competitive and functional, the Web site was a necessary venture. Cactus, armed with MSF best practices, worked with Exit.ca to ensure that the site's second version would be spectacular. The result is the ability to build prize-winning Web sites in a shorter time frame and using a smaller staff, resulting in increased profits.***

#### **Situation**

The first version of the vacation Web site was not the successful site the innovative Exit.ca staff members had anticipated. The site's performance and functionality were not as efficient as Air Transat had hoped; in fact, the site was so user-unfriendly and difficult that customers did not use it. The first version was also sluggish — the features were not implemented correctly and, therefore, usually did not perform properly. The project's time frame was extensive, its costs were high, and it required more than 25 staff members to create. Exit.ca knew what they wanted for their site, and the solution provider understood the technology; however, they were unable to communicate their expectations to each other. The project was considered a fiasco. Exit.ca knew it had to do something to give their flailing e-commerce business a much-needed revival. Air Transat decided that if the enhanced site was not up and running successfully within three months, it would be terminated.

#### **Solution**

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#### **Solution Overview**

##### **Company**

Transat A.T.

##### **Customer Profile**

Cactus Communications Internet, a five-year-old company located in Quebec, Canada, has worked continually with Microsoft to establish Cactus as a leading IT developer of successful e-commerce projects using Microsoft® technology.

##### **Business Situation**

Air Transat wanted a vacation Web site that would appeal to its customers. Their vision was to be the first in the field to provide online travel accommodations. The company realized if they were to be competitive and functional, the Web site was a necessary venture.

##### **Solution Description**

Cactus, armed with MSF best practices, worked with Exit.ca to ensure that the site's second version would be spectacular.

##### **Benefits**

Benefits include a prize-winning Web site built in a shorter time frame and using a smaller staff, resulting in increased profits.

##### **Partner(s)**

Cactus Communications Internet  
Exit.ca

##### **Software and Services**

- [Microsoft Solutions Framework](#)
- [Microsoft Visual Studio 6.0](#)

##### **Vertical Industries**

Transportation

##### **Country/Region**

Canada

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Air Transat is a subsidiary of Transat A.T., which is not only a leader in Canada's holiday travel industry, but is also major competitor in France, and a vacation travel contender in Cuba.



Air Transat specializes in chartering vacation flights from various cities to exotic and relaxing destinations. The company wanted to sharpen its competitive edge and increase its customer base. In order to do this, Air

Transat had to provide something unique to potential customers. In today's market, the Internet is an efficient way to reach new customers. Vacation Web sites might provide travel information, unveil special discounts, allow customers to make airline reservations, and give customers the ability to share their travel information with others. Air Transat, part of a very competitive industry, wanted to be one of the first organizations to build such a vacation Web site.

Exit.ca, a subsidiary of Air Transat, was formed to create and manage Air Transat's Web site to attract new customers, promote sales, and increase Air Transat's profit margin.

**“ It was like magic. Using the byproducts of communications, teamwork and savings enabled us to execute version 2 of the Web site within a very aggressive time frame.**

**Gary Dickinson**  
Executive VP, Cactus  
Communications

Exit.ca contacted Microsoft Consulting Services (MCS) looking for a viable solution to save their broken Web site. After reviewing the technology and determining it to be sound, MCS provided Microsoft® Solutions Framework (MSF) and Microsoft Active Directory® directory service information and training. After the initial MCS consultation, Exit.ca contacted Cactus Communications Internet, a Microsoft partner that has a reputation for completing successful Web projects, and asked Cactus to assist Exit.ca with the new version of their site.

” Cactus joined the project armed with MSF and IT knowledge and accepted the challenge to enhance Exit.ca's vacation Web site. The Cactus and Exit.ca project team worked together as one unit with a common vision. The project's scope was established, and each team member committed to the plan. The team members

made quick decisions, assessed and evaluated risks while avoiding them whenever possible, understood their responsibilities to the project, and were aware of the project's direction. To quote Gary Dickinson, Executive Vice President of Cactus, "It was like magic. Using the byproducts of communications, teamwork and savings enabled us to execute version 2 of the Web site within a very aggressive time frame."

## Benefits

Using MSF processes to complete the Web site project resulted in fantastic benefits, including an efficient and trouble-free site that allows customers to:

- Easily manipulate the information
- Obtain their required results

- Finish the sale without any obstacles

The project was completed in a record three-month time frame, saving approximately 50 percent in development costs. Version 2 of Exit.ca's site was completed and released in a shorter time frame and only required 15 staff members. The site helped Air Transat achieve its goal to be the largest real-time vacation service available on the Web. It increased revenues 1000 percent and continues to grow. Exit.ca was so delighted with the project's results that they created an MSF hybrid to use in their future projects. According to Michel Boilard, general manager of Exit.ca, "the introduction of MSF rejuvenated the project team and injected a 'success' atmosphere. An open and solid flow of ideas, concepts and fun enabled the team to keep focused and dedicated to on-time delivery of an exciting and responsive shopping solution."

### **For More Information**

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[⚡ Top](#)