



Imagine Tours & Travel Case Study

SCALABLE, SECURE, AND INTEGRATED E-COMMERCE DEVELOPMENT

CLIENT OVERVIEW

Imagine Tours & Travel is a Christian travel company based in Lakeland, Florida, specializing in customized biblical tours to destinations such as Israel, Greece, and Italy. Founded in 2005, Imagine has built a reputation for providing life-changing travel experiences with a focus on spiritual enrichment and educational value. As their clientele expanded, the need for a more efficient and user-friendly tour registration process became paramount.

CHALLENGE

Imagine was operating a custom-built internal CRM to manage guests and tours. However, the system lacked a secure, public-facing interface to allow customers to register online. The original developer had since moved on, leaving Imagine with only a server and a legacy application—built in an unfamiliar environment and with no clear documentation.

Key challenges included:

- **No Online Registration:** Guests had to register through manual forms or by phone, slowing down operations and increasing the potential for errors.
- **Unknown Legacy Platform:** The CRM was running on an IBM-developed web platform integrated with DB2, later identified as WebSphere—an unfamiliar environment to the new development team.
- **Scalability Limitations:** As tour volume increased, manual data entry became a bottleneck for staff.
- **Lack of Support:** With no in-house developer and no documentation, the system was fragile and difficult to extend.

PEPPER PUNCH SOLUTIONS

Our team (then operating under **Torch Designs**, now known as **Pepper Punch**) partnered with Imagine to modernize their systems and build a foundation for future growth.

✓ Reverse Engineering and Platform Discovery

We began by reverse-engineering the legacy CRM system. After analyzing the server environment, we discovered the application was built using **IBM WebSphere**, working in conjunction with an **IBM DB2** database. Despite no prior experience with this platform, we successfully:

- Learned and documented the system's structure and logic
- Established **secure, reliable database access**
- Isolated reusable business logic and workflows

✓ Secure Online Registration Portal

We designed and built a customer-facing registration portal that:

- **Enables Guest Sign-Up:** Users can securely register for tours online
- **Integrates With the Legacy System:** Real-time communication with the DB2 database maintains data consistency
- **Reduces Errors:** Tour data is tied directly to guest records
- **Protects Data:** Security best practices, including encrypted communication, were implemented

✓ Scalable, Future-Proof Architecture

To ensure flexibility, the solution included an **abstraction layer at the database level**, which decouples the registration portal from the legacy system. This makes future transitions to new platforms far easier.

RESULTS (TECHNICAL IMPACT)

- **Improved Efficiency:** Staff time spent on intake and manual entry has been significantly reduced.
- **Better Guest Experience:** Guests can now register for tours conveniently and securely online.
- **Increased Accuracy:** Automation of data entry helped minimize human error.
- **Growth-Ready Infrastructure:** The technical foundation supports future enhancements and growth.

CLIENT FEEDBACK

Founder, Rick Ricart shared that the engagement was a highly positive experience, noting that the improvements delivered early benefits with enabling online registrations.

LOOKING AHEAD

Since the initial project, **Imagine Tours & Travel** has continued to grow and invest in technology to support their expanding operations. With an internal development team now in place, they are actively exploring new ways to streamline workflows, enhance customer experiences, and improve operational efficiency through custom software solutions.