

# Aéroport de Nice is in full flight with Ibexa



Saint-Tropez, Cannes, Nice. Three world famous and renowned cities. Three destinations associated with the imagination of the Côte d'Azur. Three airports managed by Aéroports de la Côte d'Azur with a triple requirement: to energize, preserve and enhance the territory in which they operate and through which they develop. With its three strategic platforms and its business aviation assistance activities, the Aéroports de la Côte d'Azur Group has nearly 700 employees spread over 23 sites, representing one of the main European airport groups.

Nice Côte d'Azur Airport is the second largest airport in France after Paris. In 2020, it recorded passenger traffic of 4.58 million, against 14.5 million in 2019. It offers over 100 direct destinations, via 57 scheduled airlines serving 44 countries. Apart from Paris, it is also the only French airport to offer six long-haul destinations with regular flights (Bahrain, Dubai, Doha, New York, Montreal and Beijing) and to accommodate the A380 in daily flight.

France's third largest airport chose Ibexa to implement an ambitious website redesign. The new site had to immerse visitors into an intuitive and fluid experience, covering all activities of Nice airport. This involved complex integrations with flight ticketing and tracking, an e-commerce module (for such things as access to the VIP lounge, or to reserve a parking space) and include a portal for clients of the successful business aviation arm. Ibexa delivered a seamless experience across this wide range of activities and content while staying agile and robust.

Nice airport has reinvented itself as a major European hub; now it needed to offer passengers a modern digital experience. No integration was too complex and extensive, no detail too small – the Ibexa platform handled them smoothly while retaining its agility and flexibility which was badly needed as COVID-19 hit.

We have a very complete site, with a lot of content, and we are very happy with the level of quality we've been able to attain with Ibexa. That's unanimous.

## Challenges

- Migrate site content and functionality to Ibexa DXP
- Re-think and re-design the customer experience
- Integrate existing e-commerce functionality and detailed passenger flight information
- Connect to all stakeholders: internal customers, SkyValet business aviation, members of airport loyalty scheme, airport facilities and shops and commercial flight passengers
- Extend functionalities to mobile app of Nice airport.

## Project Summary

- Contract technical partners for site design and platform architecture
- Benchmark different technological solutions (with Ibexa emerging as the best)
- Interview extensively with B2C and B2B customers to perfect the UI design
- Co-ordinate project between two technology partners and other third-party solutions, particularly for e-commerce.

## Business Benefits

- Creation of a rich, complete site with a lot of content
- Design and user experience that elevates Aéroport de Nice far above the industry standard
- Seamless integration with reservation systems, e-commerce and flight information
- Agility – when COVID-19 forced the closure of a terminal, site content could be adapted at the last minute and from day to day without any issues.



## Why Ibexa?

Although Aéroport de Nice was using eZ Publish before the decision was made in 2017 to completely redesign the site, this did not mean that Ibexa was the automatic favorite to support the airport going forward. Extensive due diligence was carried out by all the stakeholders, with some emphasis on Drupal as a possible alternative, with Ibexa re-emerging as the best choice.

The implementation required extensive integrations with web services for flight information, ticket reservations, weather updates and so on. A lot of content had to be created and managed in Ibexa but displayed in the discrete e-commerce function – and do this seamlessly, without visitors being aware of it.

COVID-19 took its toll on Aéroport de Nice, but Ibexa proved its agility because it enabled site managers to adapt content at the very last minute when one of the terminals was closed. Day-to-day updates are proving as intuitive as they are indispensable.

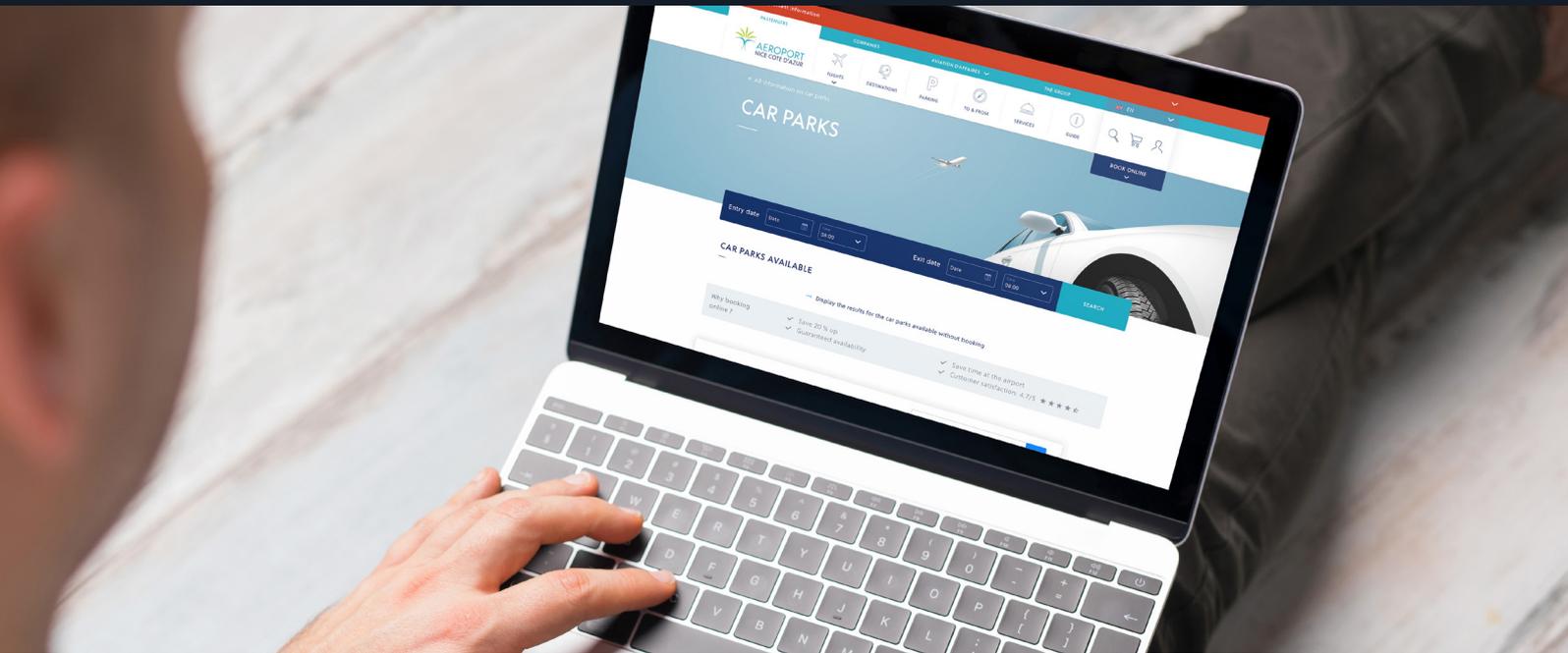
Day-to-day updates are proving as intuitive as they are indispensable.

## Digital Lab for web, mobile apps and social media

Aéroports de la Côte d’Azur owns and manages three airports in the south of France: Cannes Mandelieu, Golfe de St Tropez and Nice, by far the largest.

Five years ago, the group restructured its digital operation to bring together skills and activities dispersed across various departments. These business units were regrouped – and rehoused – in a Digital Lab, an open space of 300m<sup>2</sup>. “We took on about 15 people from different divisions,” says Benoît Valla, joint manager of the Digital Lab, “and now have a four-strong internet team for the web, mobile apps and social media. We have a team that deals with Customer Relationship Management and our loyalty program which has 35,000 members. Also there are data scientists and three years ago, we were joined by the communications division which made a lot of sense as so much of communication is digital-first nowadays.”





## Many activities, one unified platform

The next big step was to redesign the website of Aéroport de Nice, France’s third largest airport after Orly and Charles de Gaulle in Paris. This was an ambitious project, bringing together passenger and flight information; functionalities to book flights, rent a car and reserve parking space; a corporate site; a site for SkyValet, a brand specialising in ground handling services for business aviation; and a B2B portal for airport provisioning – all delivered within the same elegant and thoughtful UI.

The implementation required thorough preparation. The choice of Digital Experience Platform took in the views and analyses of the Digital Lab as well as IT questions around servers, security, and hosting and the commercial implications of the choice. The site-to-be-replaced was run on eZ Publish but this did not automatically put Ibexa in pole position. However, after benchmarking it against other technological solutions – Drupal in particular – Aéroport de Nice selected Ibexa once again as the best choice.

Jérôme Puleo, Internet Manager at Aéroports de la Côte d’Azur, recounts: “We started with a blank page in terms of everything that our passengers and other customers needed,” he says. “In terms of UI design, we really did a lot of work on our graphical identity. We contacted our customers and interviewed them at length about what digital information they needed at the airport.

“Some were invited to the Digital Lab, where we did one-to-one tests. We filmed them on our wireframes and asked them to do some navigation.”

Puleo is at pains to emphasize the importance of this groundwork. “Seek out customer,” he says, “and find out what he or she needs – find out in detail. Because time and again the detailed choices and reasoning of the customer revealed issues that had not occurred to us in our digital bubble.”

After finalizing the work on interfaces, mockups and web designs, Aéroport de Nice selected two digital agencies – and Ibexa partners – to carry out the project. The first was Internethic, with whom Nice had worked for a decade and which had the required airport expertise. The other was Kaliop, a larger agency that was more experienced in handling large-scale implementations.

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**Jérôme Puleo**

*Internet Manager, Aéroports de la Côte d’Azur*





## Seamless integration between Ibexa and other systems

Internethic and Kaliop were not the only technology partners, as Valla explains. “The e-commerce function was handled by another agency, and for our loyalty program, we have another specific partner. There were other contributors: one for the SEO responsiveness of the site, another for the site design. Part of the difficulty of the project came from orchestrating all these collaborators, coordinating their workflows and making sure they all understood our vision.”

Shops are an important part of the revenue stream of an airport, and Aéroport de Nice adds a significant e-commerce component to this. Passengers go to the site to book parking space, to fast-track boarding, to access the VIP lounge, reserve a flight or hire a car. “We had already invested a lot in our existing e-commerce solution, and this is why we decided not to deploy the commerce module native to the Ibexa DXP,” explains Puleo.

However, one of the great achievements of the project is the seamless integration between Ibexa and the third-party e-commerce tool. “There comes a point when you leave Ibexa and enter the e-commerce environment,” says Puleo, “but you can’t tell. You don’t notice. The content is created and managed in Ibexa but displayed on the e-commerce platform.”

The other achievement of the project is that the site is “100% functional and rich”, in Valla’s words. He is also proud of the way it tracks not only flight departures but also the trajectory of arriving and departing flights, all in the same elegant and clean design language that characterizes the site – and stands in sharp contrast with popular tracking apps such as Kayak or flightradar24.com.

This ease and fluidity mark the customer experience throughout, whether that customer is an arriving or departing passenger, a business partner of Aéroports de la Côte d’Azur, a SkyValet client, an investor or journalist looking for information on the group or one of the many shops at the airport.

COVID-19 slowed down the project but also somewhat overshadowed its success as passenger volumes plummeted and Nice airport closed one of its two terminals. “But here Ibexa DXP proved its agility to us because we were able to update a lot of content at the very last minute,” says Valla.

The site is 100% functional and rich marking the customer experience with ease and fluidity.



## Objective: to get every passenger visit the site

“We launched the new site in March 2020 – on the eve of these terrible lockdowns,” Valla concludes, “so it’s been impossible to evaluate its effectiveness although the feedback has been terrific. The quality is there, we’re unanimous on that.”

In 2019, when Nice airport served 14.5m passengers, the site had 3.5m unique visitors which means that roughly a third of passenger traffic connected to the site.

“The objective for us was to boost traffic, conversion, reduce bounce rates and increase the duration of the visit. What we want in the long run is to have that passenger/ visitor ratio number come a lot closer together – really to have every passenger visit our site. I think with Ibexa we have achieved at least part of that goal: giving people a reason to visit and explore our beautiful site.”

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**Benoît Valla**

*Joint manager of the Digital Lab,  
Aéroports de la Côte d’Azur*



An Ibexa Silver Partner, the Kaliop group specializes in digital transformation and innovation. Having experienced continuous growth since its creation in 2002, the group now has nearly 200 digital experts on several continents. Thanks to its comprehensive digital and business expertise, it offers a global solution to its customers and partners alike.

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Internethic is a custom web and mobile application development company. Specialized in designing responsive websites and mobile applications, Internethic exclusively uses Ibexa DXP for all multi-channel web content delivery needs. Its small but expert versatile team manages each step of a digital project and subsequent lifecycle, and achieves high levels of customer satisfaction.

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