CASE STUDY

gearUP Sports Revolutionizes the Way National Sports Leagues Shop for Team Uniforms Online

How Above The Fray successfully executed a one-of-a-kind digital transformation and systems integration for gearUP Sports. Priming the sports league uniform company to cement its reputation as an innovative industry leader.

HEADLESS | ADOBE COMMERCE

Background

gearUP Sports is a rapidly-growing distributor of custom athletic uniforms, specializing in creating branded ecommerce stores for youth leagues, schools, clubs and teams across the U.S. to simplify the experience of ordering custom sports gear both for the organizations they sell to and the end user.

Operating in the youth sports market, which dwarfs the pro and collegiate uniform segments but remains largely underserved, gearUP was aiming to disrupt the space, but behind the scenes, disconnected systems, manual workflows, and a legacy ecommerce platform were holding them back.

With a goal to scale to 1,000 store launches a week, they knew they needed more than a website. They needed a scalable ecommerce engine that could integrate with their new ERP, streamline fulfillment, and support real-time customization at scale.

Above The Fray was brought in to lead that transformation, replacing manual bottlenecks with automation, modernizing their tech stack, and helping gearUP turn their operational model into a true competitive advantage.

Addition of a custom product configurator reduced proofing time from 3–5 days to minutes, enabling gearUP to scale toward 1,000 custom stores per week.

The Challenge

Virtually all of the business's core operational processes were manual, spread across different tools including Excel spreadsheets, email, and Cognito Forms. Launching a new team web store required dozens of cross-team handoffs: gathering team rosters; assigning the right products, sizes, and embellishments; coordinating proof delivery and approvals; and managing fulfillment.

Despite the complexity of their process, gearUP's team was somehow keeping up with the launch of 75 to 100 custom web stores each week, but the cracks were starting to show.

Their existing ecommerce platform, a heavily customized version of OpenCart, wasn't built for real-time personalization or integration with their new ERP, Microsoft Dynamics.

The new system also had to support a wide range of user roles including reps, buyers, athletes, and media contributors, all with different needs, permissions, and processes.

Without a transition to a more scalable infrastructure and finding ways to leverage automation, gearUP was not going to be able to keep pace with rising demand for their custom team stores.

The Solution

Above The Fray architected and delivered a highly scalable, customized solution to support gearUP's unique business model and aggressive growth goals. Built on Adobe Commerce Cloud, the new platform integrates with Microsoft Dynamics and RabbitMQ to synchronize ecommerce, fulfillment, and finance to provide a unified digital infrastructure that powers real-time personalization and operational scale.

1. Streamlining Standard Operating Procedures

Getting a sufficient handle on the obstacles impacting the quality of operations was a primary focus. Step one involved connecting the dots across various company stakeholders in gearUP Sports finance, operations, sales, production, and design departments to accurately define the core business processes that needed to be streamlined in the first place.

To complete this work required months of discovery meetings with the gearUP Sports team to get fully aligned on the existing processes, document the SOPs, and to assess how to make them better.

Our goal was to identify inefficiencies and look for opportunities to streamline workflows with automation. This foundational work allowed ATF's technical architects to deeply understand the business needs, so that they could confidently recommend a path forward.
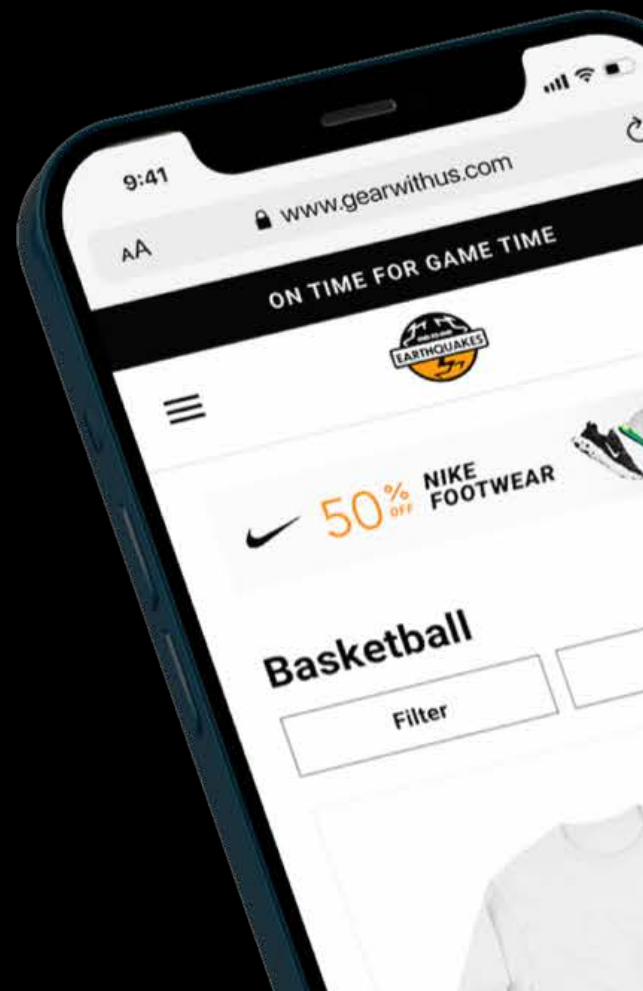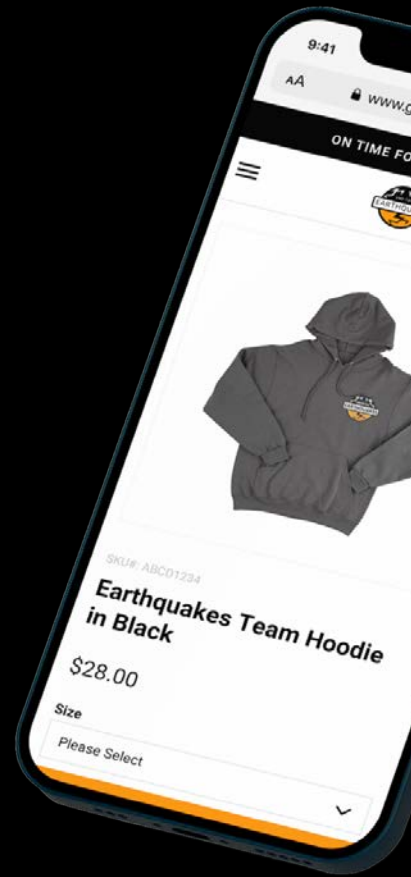
## 2. Integrating Adobe Commerce Cloud, Microsoft Dynamics & RabbitMQ

Selecting the right ecommerce platform to meet the complex criteria of this project was critical. Given that gearUP Sports has big aspirations to revolutionize the way athletes shop - for and order uniforms online, they needed a system flexible enough to accommodate complex product customizations while also supportive of a real-time integration with their ERP.

Adobe Commerce Cloud was chosen for its extensibility, headless capabilities, and compatibility to integrate with RabbitMQ and Microsoft Dynamics. RabbitMQ is an open-source message broker used for managing real-time messaging and Microsoft Dynamics is an ERP software for managing customer data, company financials, and supply chain information. Integrating these external tools and a complex series of microservices was key to enabling automation, maintaining data accuracy, and laying the groundwork for scalable growth.

"Once we were able to get to the decision to go with Adobe Commerce Cloud, then really assembling the team, I think was probably the biggest initial challenge. We did a very broad search to find qualified developers and, um, had some stumbling, stumbling up front, not uncommonly, um, couple of people, companies tried and failed and, uh, then we finally landed on a good team, Above The Fray who deserve a lot of credit for helping us pull this project together."

— Tony Alfarez, Director of Technology, gearUP Sports

With this foundational systems architecture, the gearUP Sports team can now launch fully branded web stores in minutes, with proofing, pricing, and production all being handled via automated workflows.
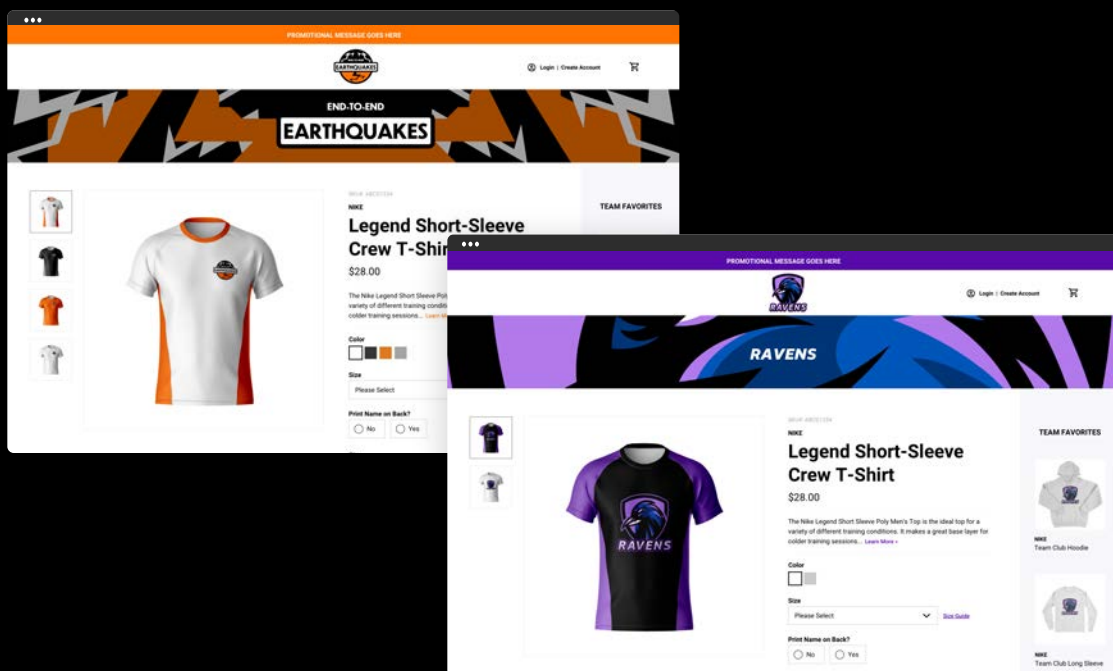
3.

Building A Custom Product Configurator

To provide a fast, dynamic and user-friendly uniform design experience, Above The Fray developed a headless, React-based product configurator that replaces the old proofing process. Sales reps, athletes, parents and fans can now add logos, names, numbers, and colors to the webstore then see those updates across hundreds of product variations.

This new workflow replaces a proofing process that previously took 3-5 days per uniform, and required manual touch points from multiple teams. Now, within minutes customers can see final proofs of the entire product catalog in the webstore designed for them. The configurator eliminates the manual effort typically required to manage made-to-order inventory at scale.

"The configurator is actually the key killer app for us. It's the ability to go in and actually design a uniform. Obviously, we have it tied into our inventory. It has to be able to create a product that can be sold on Magento. It also has to create a bill of materials that can get passed into Dynamics. And it's a very wysiwyg experience. No training involved."

— Tony Alfarez, Director of Technology, gearUP Sports
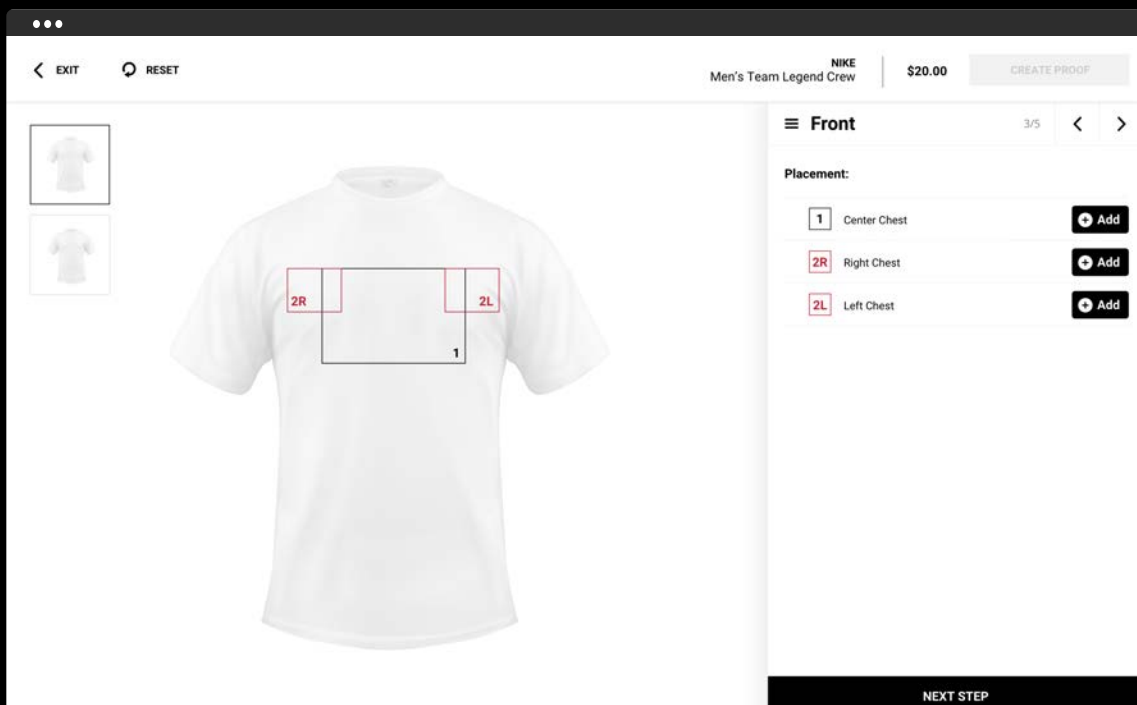
The Impact

What Does the Data Say About the Success of ATF's Work with gearUP Sports?

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Above The Fray helped us build the foundation we needed to scale our business. Before, our teams were bottlenecked by manual workflows—proofing could take days, and launching a new store was a heavy lift. Now, we're creating hundreds of fully customized stores each week, and what used to take days happens in minutes. The platform they built not only supports our current volume, it gives us room to grow—integrating with our ERP, adapting to the complexity of our pricing and fulfillment, and giving our sales team the tools they need to move fast. It's the first time we've had a system that truly matches the scale of our ambition."

— TONY ALFAREZ, DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY, GEARUP SPORTS

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Constructing a platform of this magnitude is a perfect example of our old industry adage; achieving simplicity for end users is a product of complex work behind the scenes. After months of architecting, building, integrating, and rigorous coordinating between multiple top-tier organizations, gearUP Sports is redefining the relationship between youth sports leagues and the families that participate. Creating a true paradigm shift in the team-branded apparel supply chain saves real people with real lives time and headache. And that's what all the hard work was for. Families spending more time together instead of hassling with the messy logistics of antiquated custom apparel fulfillment.

— NOAH OKEN-BERG, CEO, ABOVE THE FRAY

Project Summary & Highlights

GOALS

- Build an ecommerce + ERP infrastructure capable of scaling to 1,000 team stores per week

- Eliminate manual proofing and order coordination through real-time product visualization

- Differentiate gearUP Sports and edge out competitors

SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

- Built a custom solution on Adobe Commerce Cloud to support headless workflows and real-time store provisioning

- Developed a React-based product configurator for instant, customizable mockups

- Integrated ecommerce with Microsoft Dynamics and RabbitMQ to sync product, customer, and financial data

- Created a scalable marketplace layer for rapid store deployment and centralized management

RESULTS

- Proofing time reduced from 3–5 days to minutes

- 50+ team stores launched daily, with the system built to scale to 1,000+ per week

- Reduced company overhead across Finance, Sales, and Production teams by automating manual processes
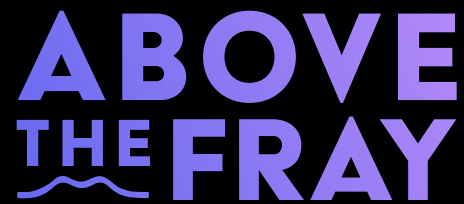
ABOVE THE FRAY

ABOUT

Above The Fray is an end-to-end global ecommerce agency specializing in consulting, designing, building, integrating, and evolving digital commerce for growth-ready manufacturers.

We're passionate about ecommerce solutions that not only increase online sales but transform businesses. We help our clients achieve process efficiency and bottom-line growth through analysis, architecture, and engineering.

Learn More about Above The Fray at www.abovethefray.io