

# Case Studies

## Centre for Adult Education

“CARS, the software application created for the OET Centre by Pitcher Partners Consulting, has greatly enhanced both our administrative efficiency and the quality of service we can provide for all stakeholders.”

Fel Bisiani, Manager, The OET Centre

### Client Snapshot

Established by government legislation in 1946, the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) is a not-for-profit organisation that offers domestic and international students an impressive range of nationally accredited diplomas, certificate programs and short courses within CBD Melbourne and immediate surrounds. Accredited courses are designed to help adults complete their secondary education and begin or change their career direction; short courses enhance knowledge and lifestyle.

The OET Centre, a department of CAE, administers and delivers the Occupational English Test (OET) which is an English language proficiency test for overseas qualified health professionals. It assesses and measures the language competency of health professionals who are seeking registration and the ability to practise in an English speaking context. Currently the test is held six times a year in over 40 locations around the world.

### The Challenge

Since CAE acquired the OET in 2004, there has been a concentrated effort to enhance its integrity and reach. Initially minor process improvements were successfully implemented, however the business recognised that a radical change to operational processes and systems would need to occur, in order to achieve its stated strategic expectations and growth.

A number of challenges were identified which existing business processes and systems could not meet. The OET Centre sought for business process improvements and IT solutions to streamline business practices and provide consistency, including:

- Centralised storage and management of candidate data including applications, test assessments and results.
- Consistency of data and information across all stages of the test administration cycle.
- Removal of data duplication and laborious manual data processing.

- Enhanced reporting capabilities.
- Significant reduction in the lead time of a test administration cycle.
- Increased productivity and efficiency.

The OET Centre sought assistance from Pitcher Partners to review their business processes and provide recommendations to achieve its strategic objectives and growth expectations.

Pitcher Partners was subsequently engaged to design and develop a custom software application using web based Microsoft technologies, referred to as the Candidate Application & Reporting System (CARS).

### The Approach

The Pitcher Partners Software Development Methodology was used to design, develop and deploy CARS. Our methodology ensures a continual focus on the business objectives, and allows for a flexible and incremental approach to the development cycle.

The process began with a series of workshops with key business

stakeholders to identify and gather requirements for the design and development of CARS. Pitcher Partners also held internal technical workshops to establish the solution architecture and interface design of the system. The outcomes of these workshops were detailed in a System Specification document that was validated by the business.

Individual business requirements were logically grouped to form incremental building blocks (referred to as “builds”) of system functionality. For each build, a series of processes took place including detailed design and validation, software development, testing and deployment of the solution. In particular, after a build was developed and tested by Pitcher Partners, the system was delivered to OET Centre staff for user acceptance testing to ensure their business requirements were met.

This approach allows for early delivery of the core requirements, and makes the testing and deployment cycles easier to manage, with lower risk. The methodology also has a degree of agility, providing the opportunity to adjust and refine the scope on commencement of each build.

Pitcher Partners is a Microsoft Gold partner, and our CARS solution was built using the Microsoft .NET framework, using ASP.NET. The solution is architected to provide a front-end public website, incorporating a Content Management System, and a core back-end business workflow

application. Whilst CARS is a custom-built application, we utilised a core library of robust and proven software components which we have developed and implemented over time.

As the system was deployed into production, it became available to candidates worldwide to apply for the OET. A support agreement was put in place to ensure support and maintenance services of CARS were provided as required.

### The Benefits

The business benefits gained from implementing CARS included:

- A business critical application that fully supports the end-to-end current and future business core activities.
- A reduction in administrative and manual overhead, allowing staff to focus on value-add activities.
- A professional and appealing web presence, placing OET at the forefront of the market, and thus attracting more candidates.
- Establishes the OET Centre as an industry benchmark, in providing full online application processing to international candidates.
- Improved efficiencies through streamlined and automated processes, allowing for a faster turnaround and increased number of test administrations per year.
- Enhanced reporting and analysis capabilities, enabling improved decision and strategic considerations.

### The Success

Pitcher Partners were able to assist the OET Centre in streamlining its operations by providing a software tool to support its current processes, growth and strategic objectives.

The resulting web system ([www.occupationalenglishtest.org](http://www.occupationalenglishtest.org)) is fully operational and efficiently manages the end-to-end lifecycle of candidates – including lodging test applications and paying online, scheduling of tests, communication with candidates, assessment processes, results collation, and publishing of statements of results. The system also provides the ability for candidates to login into a personal workspace, manage aspects of their profile and view assessment results, as well as accessing sample learning materials. Importantly, CARS is simple for the OET Centre staff to use and maintain, and has delivered the improved efficiencies and strategic online presence.

Our consultants have a strong business background that enhances their significant IT skill-sets. The combination of these skills has provided a depth of service to the OET Centre that few other organisations would be able to match.

### How We Operate

Pitcher Partners refers to the Victorian partnership and its associated entities including Pitcher Partners Advisors Proprietary Limited, Pitcher Partners Consulting Pty Ltd, Pitcher Partners Corporate Pty Ltd and Pitcher Partners Investment Services Pty Ltd.



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