

# Customizing a cult classic

Prada seizes on the power of  
personalization



# Investing in a new experience

**The Prada name has been synonymous with luxury fashion for decades, but the brand's commitment to innovation is an equally significant piece of its identity.**

Case in point: the America's Cup sneaker. In 1997, Prada took luxury sportswear to new heights when it launched the performance shoe for the Luna Rossa team ahead of the 30th edition of the namesake sailing competition. In the mid-2000s, the Italian fashion house was once again ahead of the curve when it began offering tools to personalize flagship models of the popular sneaker.<sup>1</sup> And in 2021, while planning to launch the latest

model of the iconic shoe, Prada decided to offer customers an entirely new online customization experience—one seldom found in the world of luxury products.

For customers to create their own interpretation of the sneaker, Prada envisioned a 3D web configurator that would allow the user, through simple navigation, to select from a range of materials and colors and add their initials. This would require creating a digital twin of the shoe—a virtual model designed to accurately reflect the physical object.

Prada had clear objectives for the project. First, the 3D model of the

shoe needed to meet the brand's quality and fidelity standards compared to the physical model. Second, the configurator needed to be accessible on a wide variety of browsers and devices, from mobile to desktop. And finally, to ensure a seamless user experience while making selections, Prada wanted a configurator that would load quickly.

All in all, the project would mark a significant digital leap for the brand—and help Prada pioneer new experiences steeped in traditional luxury.

"We have launched a new way of thinking of the product. Now, we have a direct interaction between the customer and the brand that offers a personalized product able to meet all customer desires. And this is just the first step in setting the stage for a scaled made-to-order product line in a reduced time-to-market, leveraging innovative 3D digital twin technology."

**CRISTIANO AGOSTINI**

Prada Group Chief Information Officer

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.prada.com/us/en/americas\\_cup.html](https://www.prada.com/us/en/americas_cup.html)

When tech meets human ingenuity

# Luxury product, luxury configurator

**Prada tapped Accenture to develop a high-quality virtual model and state-of-the-art configurator for the new sneaker. The project kicked off with a visit to the Accenture Customer Innovation Network (ACIN) in Milan to outline the customization solution, and then a team of computer-generated imagery (CGI) experts got to work on the digital twin.**

Accenture worked closely with Prada's product and marketing teams to create the 3D model.

The focus was on creating a virtual representation that faithfully reflected every detail of the physical shoe's size, shape, materials and colors.

From there, the team began building the configurator on Prada's cloud-based infrastructure. On the front end, Prada designed a clearly guided journey that presents a digestible overview of options, while Accenture developed the experience. The user selects the material and color for different parts of the shoe, then has the option to add their initials to the back tab.

Throughout the process, the user can interact with the 3D model of their custom shoe in 360 degrees, rotating and zooming in and out.

On the back end, Accenture worked with Prada's IT department to integrate the configurator with its existing ecommerce and order management systems. Since it would be impossible to pre-render 2D images for the more than 50 million possible shoe configurations, the team had to devise a new system to render images in real time.





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**The result was an innovative rendering server: As a user configures a shoe online, the rendering server generates high-resolution images of that particular configuration, which can then be distributed across Prada's various systems in seconds.**

This allows images of the shoe to be displayed to the user throughout the process, and once the shoe has been finalized and purchased, the production team uses that configuration's accompanying images to fulfill the order accurately.

Finally, Accenture created an enhanced version of the configurator for use in Prada stores. In this setting, the salesperson guides the customer through the customization process with an iPad Pro. The team designed the in-store experience to be continuous, optimizing the original configurator so that it would cache and load assets with no lag time.

A valuable difference



# The next wave of customization

**Prada launched the web configurator in just four months, followed by the in-store version three weeks later. Defined by self-sufficient simplicity to help customers successfully navigate their path to purchase, the America's Cup sneaker configurator remains live on Prada.com in almost every country, as well as in stores across the US, Europe and Asia.**

The quality of the experience surpassed expectations across the board. The 3D model of the shoe is highly realistic, and the configurator loads in just a few seconds—exceeding Prada's initial target loading speed. But the most innovative element is the rendering server,

which generates 4K images of custom builds in real time. And with a scalable cloud architecture, the customization solution gives Prada the flexibility to apply the same strategy to other products. In fact, Accenture has already delivered a similar configurator offering Prada customers the opportunity to customize the brand's Galleria handbag at select stores.

Along with delighting customers with new experiences in luxury product customization, Prada is showing it can find new ways to grow. Ultimately, the America's Cup sneaker project is helping a heritage brand sprint into the next decade.

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