



Turning "If only" into "We can": How CAE Labs empowers us to achieve the unachievable



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More good days, powered by automation, integration and intelligence. The philosophy behind our in-house software development practice weaves through everything we do here at CAE. It's what makes us different, allowing us to see solutions where other providers have admitted defeat.

But how did CAE Labs come into existence, and what lies ahead in our trailblazing journey of discovery?

POWERED BY
CAE LABS

In my 19 years here at CAE, I've seen a lot of changes. But one thing has remained constant throughout that time: a company-wide dedication to developing and nurturing talent. It's a formula that works for us - because it's our people, their ideas and an openness to experimentation that are the key to our success.

Now that we stand at the cusp of a new era full of potential, it's a good time to look back at the history of creative software development within CAE, reflecting on our culture, our approach and the exciting future plans we have for CAE Labs.



How it all started: Network Intelligence

CAE is a company that has always encouraged technical innovation. But it has been a gradual evolution in our 30 year history, from selling existing products to developing our own new solutions.

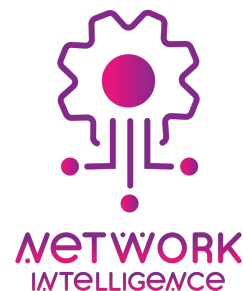
The origins of CAE Labs go back to 2013 when our Strategic Innovation Lead, Ali McKeand, saw an opportunity to make changes based on a new Cisco product. Cisco's Smart Collector provided all the data that was available on a customers' Cisco infrastructure, but there was so much information churned out that it wasn't easy to interpret. Ali's question was: How do we simplify this, to cut through the noise and make it relevant and useful for our customers?

Within CAE, I see my primary role as enabling people to deliver their passion. So I encouraged Ali to delve further and investigate the art of the possible.



"It's easy to rely on traditional models, but sometimes doing it differently is best for the customer."
Ali McKeand, Strategic Innovation Lead

The resulting product, **Network Intelligence**, was the first piece of software developed within CAE. A simple and user-friendly traffic-light system, it focused on four key areas: coverage status, software, hardware and security alerts. It remains a powerful and popular part of our service offering today, providing valuable insights that aren't available through any other product.



Automation as the key to innovation

In its first incarnation, Network Intelligence was a manual process. It took five days out of every month for a member of the team to put together all the reports in PDF form for every customer. But as our customer base grew, the need for an automated dashboard became pressing.

Having achieved this, we saw the tangible value of automation, both for our customers and in our own work. Saving time, saving effort and improving efficiency are all vital drivers for our customers - and we know first hand that automation is one of the most effective ways to achieve this.

Today, everyone we work with can benefit from another in-house CAE Labs product called Nucleus - a powerful tool for automating many of the elements of large-scale network deployments. This game-changing technology innovation is unique to CAE Labs and has become indispensable in the provisioning of Cisco Enterprise and Cisco Meraki products, speeding up provisioning activities from hours, into minutes and seconds.

Find out more about automation and the fundamental role it plays in our work

What makes CAE Labs unique?

Launching CAE Labs, our very own in-house software development practice, is a visible and significant commitment to innovation. The level of investment and dedication that we put into new ways of doing things is unique and unprecedented, something you won't find anywhere else. We have a clear vision that we want to realise: creating new capabilities that our customers will benefit from.

To make that happen, it all comes down to our people and our culture. Driven by their own experiences of deploying different types of technology, we nurture our experts to use technical innovation in everything they do, thinking outside the box to find new solutions that will lead to more good days for our customers.

We give our people the room and encouragement to think, to experiment and to try new things - even if they may not work out.

Prevention is better than a cure, with Assure

Sometimes a good day is all about what doesn't happen. Nothing goes wrong, everything goes smoothly, and you don't even notice the technology that is supporting you to get the job done.

That's what we're so proud of in another CAE Labs product: **Assure**.

Imagine that moment we all fear: you've somehow hit the wrong button and managed to delete your live production environment. The realisation slowly builds: this is going to be a really bad day (and probably a bad few weeks too, as you work to mitigate the consequences of that single moment).

But with Assure from CAE Labs, there's a quick fix that you won't get anywhere else. With a quick call to our support team, your data can be restored in minutes, rather than the days or months it might have taken otherwise.

For customers using the Cisco Meraki platform, Assure offers business resilience and the peace of mind that your data is safe, mitigating against downtime and outages and restoring your infrastructure quickly and reliably if needed.



ASSURE





Bringing it all together with software integration

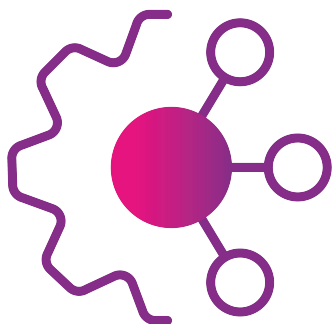
We talk a lot about integration at CAE Labs, and alongside automation and intelligence it's one of our three core pillars. But what does integration mean for our customers? As we see it, there are two elements to integration, both of which are essential to our approach at CAE Labs.

Firstly, there is silent, behind-the-scenes integration within our own CAE systems and services. For example, our ITSM and our logic monitor platform work seamlessly together, enabling us to deliver results for our customers more efficiently.

Then there is the type of integration that has more of a direct impact on our customers, linking together our tool sets with our customer platforms.

There's lots we still want to achieve in terms of integration. For example, we are excited to explore the potential for integrating platforms that we don't use ourselves but that our customers do, creating joined-up systems to improve efficiency, workflow and usability.

[Read more about our approach to integration](#)



What makes CAE Labs unique?

The exciting thing about CAE Labs is that whatever happens, you can guarantee things won't stay still. We can't always predict exactly what products or outcomes our research and development at CAE Labs will result in. But however we evolve from here, one thing is for sure: our work will always be underpinned by our three core pillars: automation, integration and intelligence.

An award-winning focus on sustainability

Sustainability will be an increasingly important business focus into the future. So everything we do at CAE Labs is aimed at improving our carbon footprint and those of our customers.

One of the most exciting new developments from CAE Labs is an energy-saving innovation that could save businesses up to 70% of the power they currently waste. Originating from a conversation with a customer who was looking for ways to work more sustainably, WisserWatts is a platform that enables customers to easily turn off infrastructure at switch port level when not in use; and it recently came third in the [Cisco Global Digital Sustainability Challenge](#).

Having been trialled by one customer for three months, WisserWatts has had a significant impact, both on cost saving and on the environment. **We recently integrated WisserWatts into the Network Intelligence platform, so everything can be accessed and controlled in one place.**



Continual improvement: Our culture and approach

CAE Labs is the core of innovation throughout the business, from projects to managed services and technical innovation. And for us, that means always moving forward.

The CAE Labs culture is one of continual change and questioning. We don't necessarily settle for things just how they are: instead we're always thinking about how we can do it differently and better. That means continually looking at how we can make efficiencies and improvements, whether that's a technical solution, an app or a product, or how we actually deliver our services to our customers. We often face problems brought to us by clients: issues that don't seem to have a clear resolution; perhaps their existing provider has said there's nothing that can be done. That's one of the things we find so satisfying, and what sets us apart at CAE: what's 'impossible' to others is an opportunity to innovate and challenge the status quo to us.

The answer could be in the form of a single solution, but it's more likely to involve multiple solutions. Every new product and outcome is different. But they come from a common core: the motivation to understand customer needs, to understand what the technology can do for customers and to extract that value from those platforms - for more good days.

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