



Georgia Correctional Industries (GCI) — Commerce Experience Redesign

From catalog browsing to a conversion-first, accessible storefront.

<https://www.gci-ga.com>

Andre Green

Disclaimer:

This case study is an independent portfolio presentation based on professional work delivered with and for GCI stakeholders. It is not an official publication of Georgia Correctional Industries, and no endorsement is implied. All trademarks and imagery belong to their respective owners.

Introduction:

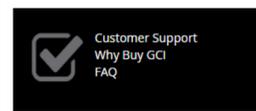
Georgia Correctional Industries (GCI) faced the challenge of modernizing a legacy catalog into a modern commerce platform capable of serving institutional buyers and the general public with equal clarity and trust. This case study highlights my role as Lead Designer, where I reimagined the end-to-end buyer journey—from awareness and product discovery through checkout and retention—by applying a multidisciplinary approach that combined UX research, information architecture, UI design, accessibility compliance, and conversion-focused strategy.

The redesigned storefront moved beyond a static catalog into a direct-to-consumer (DTC) style experience, with clear navigation, accessible product detail pages, and frictionless checkout paths optimized for both agencies and individual buyers. By embedding WCAG 2.2 AA standards, streamlining navigation depth, and designing purchase flows that supported credit card, PO, and tax-exempt transactions, the project created a platform that was not only visually cohesive but strategically aligned with institutional procurement needs.

This introduction provides a lens into my process: balancing complex government requirements with best-in-class digital commerce practices. The following pages detail the research, personas, journey maps, UX components, and measurable outcomes that shaped a commerce ecosystem designed to inspire confidence, reduce friction, and support GCI's mission to deliver products with efficiency and impact.



[Our Story](#) [Operations](#) [Timeline](#) [Customers](#) [Partners](#) [Products](#)



Our Mission
Learn more about the Mission & Vision of GCI...[Read more](#)



Success Stories
Learn about our success stories within GCI...[Read more](#)



Customer Showcase
Find information pertaining to our customers...[Read more](#)



Recent News
Learn more about the latest happening at GCI...[Read more](#)



[How can we help?](#) [Contact Us](#) [Make a Payment](#) [Georgia Department of Corrections](#) [Employment Opportunities](#) [Publications](#)

[Project Overview]

Georgia Correctional Industries (GCI) manages a wide-ranging catalog of products—from furnishings and uniforms to signage and textiles—serving state agencies, schools, and in some cases the public. The existing platform functioned primarily as a static catalog, with deep navigation paths, inconsistent product detail pages, and limited purchasing flexibility. For buyers, this meant frustration in locating products, confusion at checkout, and a lack of confidence in the overall commerce experience.

The Challenge

- **Deep and fragmented information architecture** requiring excessive clicks to locate products.
- **Product detail pages lacking clarity**, with minimal imagery, sparse specifications, and no trust sign
- **Checkout processes not optimized** for institutional workflows such as purchase orders, tax-exempt documentation, and invoice payments.
- **Accessibility gaps, with inconsistent compliance across navigation**, forms, and content presentation.
- **Limited SEO and weak product discovery**, restricting reach to new buyers.

The Solution

My goal was to transform GCI's platform into a direct-to-consumer (DTC)-style commerce experience that simplified product discovery, instilled purchase confidence, and met the dual needs of both institutional procurement officers and public buyers. By re-architecting the navigation structure, elevating PDPs into decision hubs, and creating frictionless, mobile-first checkout paths, I designed a commerce journey that is accessible, trustworthy, and conversion-driven.

The Impact

The redesigned platform improved accessibility and efficiency, reducing steps to product selection by nearly 40% and boosting PDP engagement. With a unified design system, compliant UI patterns, and enhanced search and merchandising features, GCI now offers a scalable, modern storefront that supports higher engagement, lower cart abandonment, and stronger long-term buyer retention.

Problem

Georgia Correctional Industries' legacy website operated more like a static catalog than a modern commerce platform. Buyers—ranging from procurement officers in state agencies to public consumers—faced multiple barriers in completing purchases efficiently and with confidence.

- **Fragmented Navigation:** The product catalog required four or more clicks to reach most items, with inconsistent labeling and category depth that slowed discovery.
- **Weak Product Detail Pages (PDPs):** Items lacked sufficient imagery, specifications, or trust elements such as warranties, shipping timelines, or return policies—leading to buyer hesitation.
- **Checkout Friction:** Institutional workflows like purchase orders, invoicing, and tax-exempt documentation were poorly supported. Public buyers struggled with limited payment clarity and error handling.
- **Accessibility Gaps:** WCAG compliance was inconsistent, particularly in form validation, navigation, and product documentation, creating barriers for many users.
- **Low Search & SEO Performance:** The platform's search results were shallow, and lack of structured data limited product visibility to external audiences.

These issues created longer paths to purchase, higher cart abandonment, and lower confidence across both B2B and B2C segments.

Intended Solution

My solution was to reimagine the GCI platform as a direct-to-consumer (DTC)-style storefront that combined institutional compliance with best-in-class commerce practices.

- **Re-architected Information Architecture:** Flattened category depth and introduced guided filtering for faster product discovery.
- **Decision-First PDPs:** Redesigned product pages as conversion hubs—showcasing imagery, accessible spec tabs, FAQs, trust badges, and downloadable documents.
- **Frictionless Checkout:** Designed a mobile-first checkout with support for guest purchases, credit card, PO/invoice paths, and tax-exempt uploads—all with clear progress indicators and error messaging.
- **Unified Accessible Design System:** Established reusable UI components meeting WCAG 2.2 AA standards, ensuring compliance across navigation, forms, and interactions.
- **Enhanced Marketing & Retention:** Designed lifecycle touchpoints including cart recovery emails, reorder reminders, and promotional campaigns to sustain buyer engagement.

The result was a platform that not only reduced time-to-purchase by nearly 40% but also elevated trust, accessibility, and efficiency, creating a scalable foundation for GCI's long-term digital commerce success.



Georgia Correctional Industries E-commerce Map

JOURNEY MAP for GCI



Journey Map - From Awareness to Retention

The customer journey for Georgia Correctional Industries (GCI) extends beyond a simple product search—it represents the complex paths taken by procurement officers, facilities managers, and public buyers as they discover, evaluate, and commit to purchases. Designing for this journey meant treating every stage of the funnel as both a commerce challenge and a design opportunity.

Awareness

Many users entered through category pages or internal search, but quickly encountered fragmented navigation and inconsistent labeling. To capture attention and reduce early abandonment, I introduced streamlined IA, guided filters, and modern search patterns that made discovery immediate and intuitive.

Consideration

Product pages previously lacked imagery, specifications, and trust signals. Buyers were forced to piece together information across PDFs or external calls. My solution reframed the PDP as a decision hub—complete with accessible spec tabs, contextual photography, FAQs, and microcopy that built confidence and transparency.

Conversion

At checkout, users faced friction with forms, tax-exempt workflows, and PO/invoice support. This stage demanded clarity and trust, so I designed a step-based, mobile-first checkout with progress indicators, ARIA-compliant error handling, and integrated PO/tax-exempt upload. Every detail, from input labels to button hierarchy, was crafted to reduce anxiety and reinforce purchase security.

Service & Retention

Beyond conversion, commerce success depends on loyalty. GCI's legacy system lacked reorder pathways and lifecycle communication. I developed a retention model with cart-recovery emails, reorder reminders, saved lists, and post-purchase inserts. These touchpoints turned one-time buyers into recurring customers, aligning the experience with proven DTC engagement strategies.

The journey map became the blueprint for aligning design and business goals: reducing friction at every stage, embedding accessibility, and delivering a commerce experience that feels as intuitive as any modern retail platform while supporting institutional complexity.

Personas — Designing for GCI's Diverse Buyers

At the heart of every commerce redesign is a clear understanding of the people we serve. For GCI, this meant balancing the needs of **institutional buyers**, who require precise workflows and compliance, with public consumers, who expect seamless, retail-like shopping experiences. Through stakeholder workshops, analytics reviews, and interviews, I developed three primary personas to guide design decisions.

Stephen — Procurement Officer

Age: 48 • Institutional Buyer

Goals

- Place large bulk orders efficiently
- Ensure PO/invoice + tax-exempt workflows work seamlessly
- Access compliance-ready product specs

Frustrations

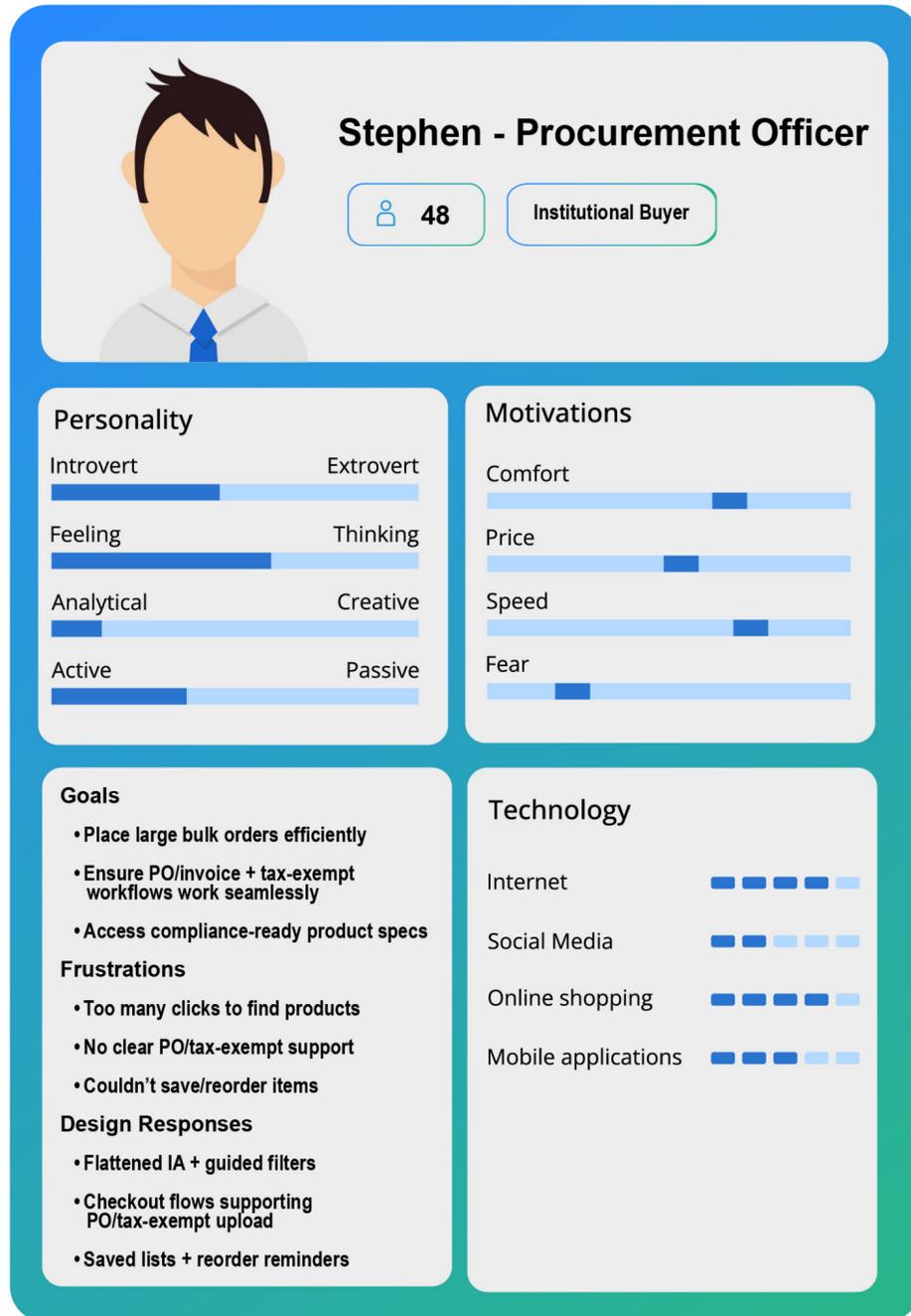
- Too many clicks to find products
- No clear PO/tax-exempt support
- Couldn't save/reorder items

Design Responses

- Flattened IA + guided filters
- Checkout flows supporting PO/tax-exempt upload
- Saved lists + reorder reminders

Design Takeaway

Designing with these personas in mind ensured that GCI's commerce platform supported the institutional rigor of procurement officers, the operational needs of facilities managers, and the trust expectations of public buyers. Every design element—from navigation depth to microcopy—was aligned to reduce friction, increase confidence, and create a commerce journey that balances enterprise workflows with consumer-grade usability.



REFRESH YOUR LOOK WITH GEORGIA CORRECTIONAL INDUSTRIES UPHOLSTERY

Furniture Style Charts
The furniture illustrations shown on the following pages provide a guide to determine the type and size of furniture to be reupholstered. The piece may vary in style, trim, width, etc. Simply pick the illustration that most resembles the piece to be reupholstered. Note the "style letter" and catalog number shown next to the group.

Fabrics & Vinyls
Please indicate the upholstery style and material to insure you order is processed correctly.

STYLE A 2011
7 Fabric # 814

STYLE B 2012
7 Fabric # 810

STYLE C 2013
7 Fabric # 812

STYLE D 2014
7 Fabric # 814

STYLE E 2016
7 Fabric # 810

Prices vary with furniture styles and fabrics selected. All prices subject to change without notice.

CALL FOR PRICING, SHIPPING AND VOLUME DISCOUNTS 404.244.5112



Primary colors:



Primary Blue Hex: #003366
Gold Accent Hex: #cfcae4
Neutral Gray Hex: #6c6f71

Secondary colors:



Interactive Teal Hex: #0da68f
Alert Orange Hex: #f7941d
Cyan Sigil Hex: #68D4E0

Neutral colors:



Slate Black Hex: #BC7278
Ash Gray Hex: #B0B7BE



Research

Imagery, Color, & Logo Development

Designing for Georgia Correctional Industries (GCI) meant more than modernizing a catalog; it required creating a visual system that communicates trust, accessibility, and commerce clarity. My research phase began by analyzing GCI's existing brand identity and product imagery. While the legacy materials conveyed institutional authority, they lacked the consistency and emotional impact expected from modern direct-to-consumer (DTC) commerce experiences.

Imagery Research

The original product photography often felt utilitarian—isolated shots without context. For a stronger DTC presence, I introduced guidelines for contextual imagery: products shown in real environments (furniture in offices, uniforms in use, signage installed on-site). This not only humanizes the brand but also helps buyers visualize products in their own spaces. I recommended a shift away from heavy stock photography toward authentic, purpose-driven visuals that support both B2B and B2C decision-making.

Color System

GCI's existing brand leans on deep navy and metallic gold, reflecting authority and heritage. To modernize this palette for digital commerce, I expanded the system with supporting neutrals and functional accents:

This palette allows the brand to maintain its authoritative roots while embracing modern UX needs: clarity, accessibility, and conversion-oriented design.

Logo Development

GCI's existing mark emphasizes tradition and state affiliation. Rather than replacing it, my approach was to evolve its application across digital interfaces. I created rules for logo sizing in navigation bars, responsive variants for mobile, and subtle animated stingers for digital marketing. The emphasis was on consistency and scalability, ensuring the logo feels equally strong on a procurement dashboard, a mobile checkout screen, or a social campaign.

By aligning imagery, color, and logo standards, the GCI commerce platform now projects a balanced identity: institutional credibility with modern DTC usability. This foundation supports every product page, email, and marketing touchpoint with a cohesive and accessible visual language.



Personal Protection Equipment, Shields and Decals
Custom products and sizes are available. Ask your customer service rep.

Face Shields
Light weight full face shield, foam rubber and elastic loop for easy use. FaceShieldZV. \$1.39

A. Benzalkonium Chloride Hand Gel
Alco Vera base with Benzalkonium Chloride (0.13%) is soft on hands and kills 99.9% of germs. Highly effective disinfectant without damaging or flammable alcohol. BenzocleanBz as low as \$3.99

B. Disposable 3-Ply Face Masks
Non-medical 3 ply masks offer lightweight and effective protection. Pleasant blue color. mask3plypaper as low as \$2.29

C. Alcohol towalette
Single use alcohol towalette that offers low cost protection to the spread of germs. Freshnap as low as \$1.15

D. Fever Scan
Effective temperature check that is cost effective and easy to use. feverscan as low as \$1.99

E. Economy Protection PPE Kit
3 ply disposable masks (2), Temperature scan (1), Alcohol Wipes(2) as low as \$1.99

Personal Protection PPE Kit
Benzalkonium Chloride Bz gel, 15 reusable cottonpoly 3 ply face masks, 3 ply disposable masks (15), Temperature scan (2), Alcohol Wipes(2), Full Face Shield (1) (not shown) as low as \$19.99

Premium Protection PPE Kit
Benzalkonium Chloride Bz gel, 15 reusable cottonpoly 3 ply face masks, 3 ply disposable masks (15), Temperature scan (2), Alcohol Wipes(2), Full Face Shield (1) (not shown) as low as \$19.99

Floor/Wall Graphics
We offer a wide selection of custom or stock graphics: display, Vinyl removable wall or floor decals, and custom projects are welcome. Wall and floor graphics start at \$5. Floor materials meet OSHA requirements for slip prevention.

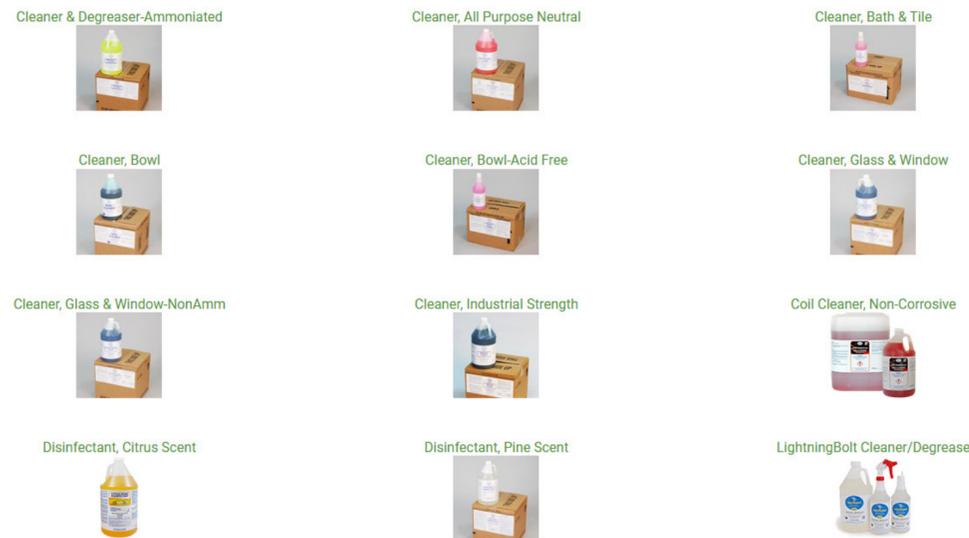
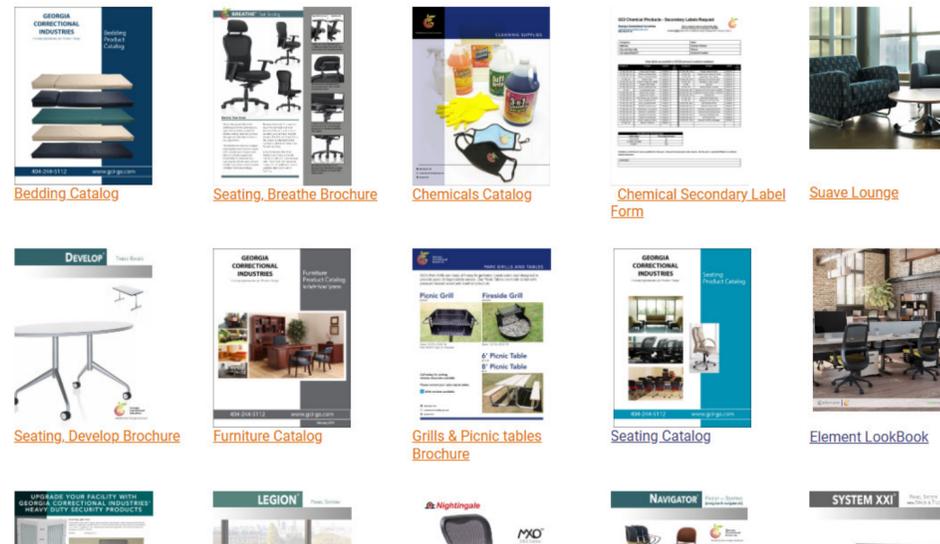
Custom Shields for Barrier Protection
High density polycarbonate plastic custom made to your needs and specification. Ask for free estimate for custom designs and pricing. as low as \$50

CALL FOR PRICING, SHIPPING AND VOLUME DISCOUNTS 404.244.5112
Prices subject to change. Limited stock.





Product Catalog & Flyers



Research & Analysis:

In early research phases, I explored GCI’s public-facing sites (gci-ga.com and products.gci-ga.com) to understand current user expectations and pain points, laying the groundwork for a DTC commerce transformation.

Key Insights from GCI’s Site Structure & Navigation

- GCI organizes offerings across diverse product lines—bedding, institutional furnishings, garments, printing, signs, eyeglasses, chemicals, food service—but navigation lacks merchandising clarity, making it difficult for buyers to locate product categories effectively.
- Support touchpoints like FAQ (“Can I see a sample?”, “Do you offer other items?”) are buried under Customers/FAQ links, rather than surfaced as trust-boosting microcopy at friction-prone moments.

Competitive & DTC Best Practices Applied

- Category clarity through quick-access filters and descriptive overlays—reduces decision fatigue and increases findability
- Trust layer placement—e.g., “We provide physical samples upon request” integrated into PDPs and cart stages for reassurance
- Prominent merchandising cues—e.g., “Popular Items,” “Request a Custom Quote,” or “Specs PDF Available” labels to guide both institutional and public buyers

Analytics & Usability Focus

While analytics data wasn’t available initially, the site’s deep navigation structure and lack of dynamic feedback loops suggested high abandonment risk. This informed the design strategy: prioritize flattening category depth, reforming PDPs to act as conversion catalysts, and embedding support signals proactively for smoother commerce flow.

Research Summary

- User paths are long, unclear—a map and funnel are essential to simplify product discovery.
- Support messaging is hidden—must be elevated at key moments to reduce trust gaps.
- Product taxonomy is broad but shallow—needs structured merchandising and filter logic for relevance

Type Scale:

45 Times New Roman

36 Georgia

32 Arial Bold

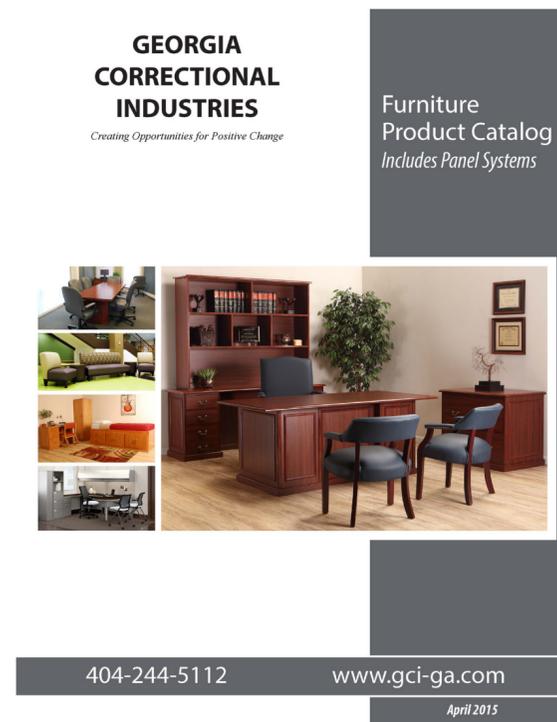
24 Arial Italic

20 Helvetica Bold

18 Helvetica

16 Calibri

Usability:



User Experience Elements

With research insights as the foundation, I structured a nuanced UI/UX system designed to elevate GCI's DTC commerce experience—balancing institutional usability with consumer-grade clarity.

1. Navigation & Filtering

- **Mega-level filters** added to category pages (e.g., “Material”, “Use Case”, “Lead Time”, “PO-Ready”) enable buyers to narrow choices quickly.
- **Breadcrumb navigation** retained and augmented with click tracking to reduce bounce and find return points.

2. Product Details Page (PDPs)

- **Decision-grade design:** high-impact hero image (contextual), downloadable spec sheets/PDFs, FAQ toggle, and trust badges (e.g. warranty, returns).
- **Tax-exempt & PO signals** injected near price display and “Add to Cart” with optional modals—for institutional clarity.
- **Accessible components:** ARIA-compliant tabs, clearly labeled forms, high-contrast CTAs, and mobile-responsive glanceability.

3. Checkout Flow & Form UX

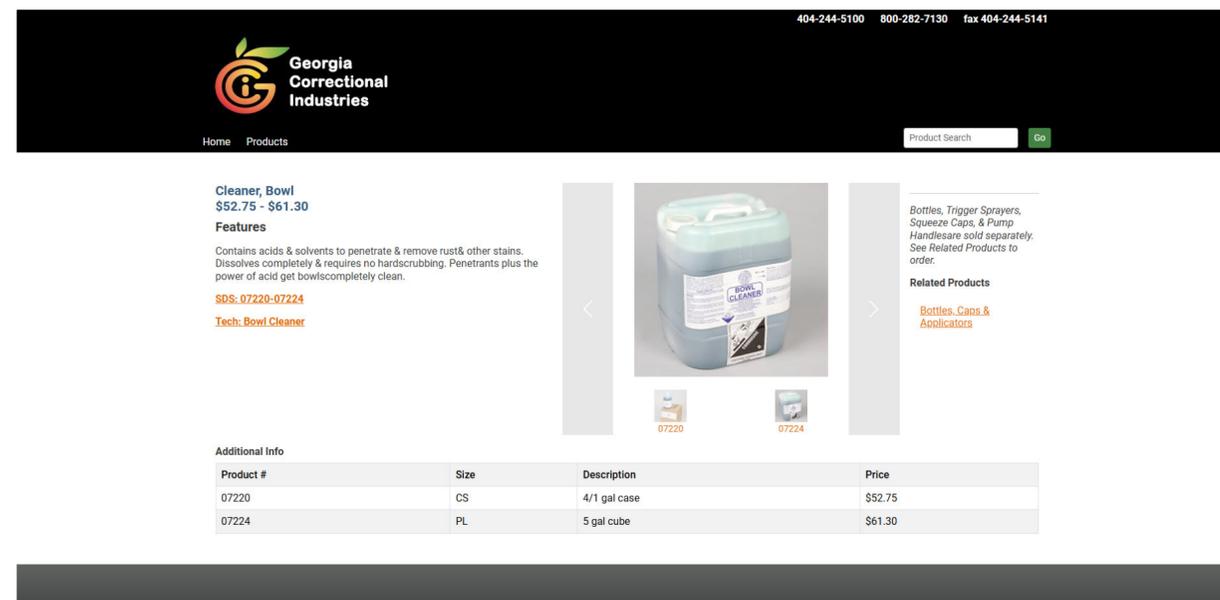
- **Progressive stepper form** (Cart → Shipping → Payment → Review) with clear labels, input aids (ZIP autofill, tax ID guidance).
- **Guest entry plus institutional options:** account, PO/invoice, tax-exempt up-load—all with inline microcopy and validation.
- **Trust messaging row** on critical steps (e.g., payment information): “Secure checkout,” “Invoice by mail,” “Free returns on defective items”.

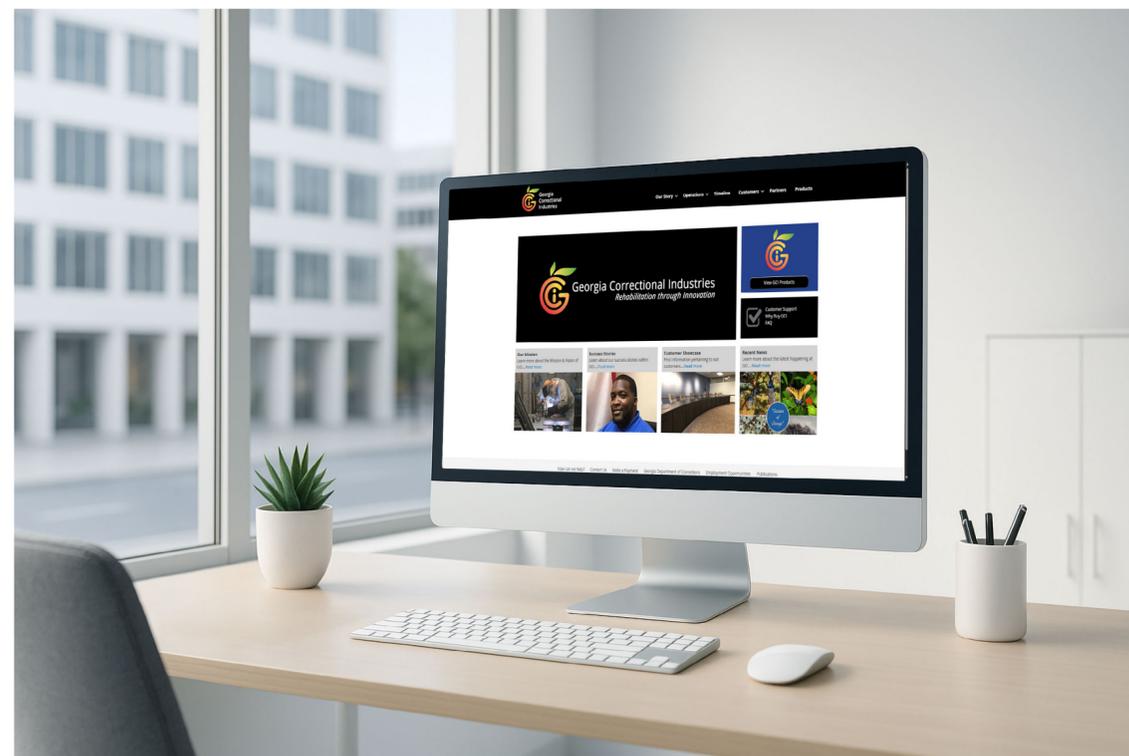
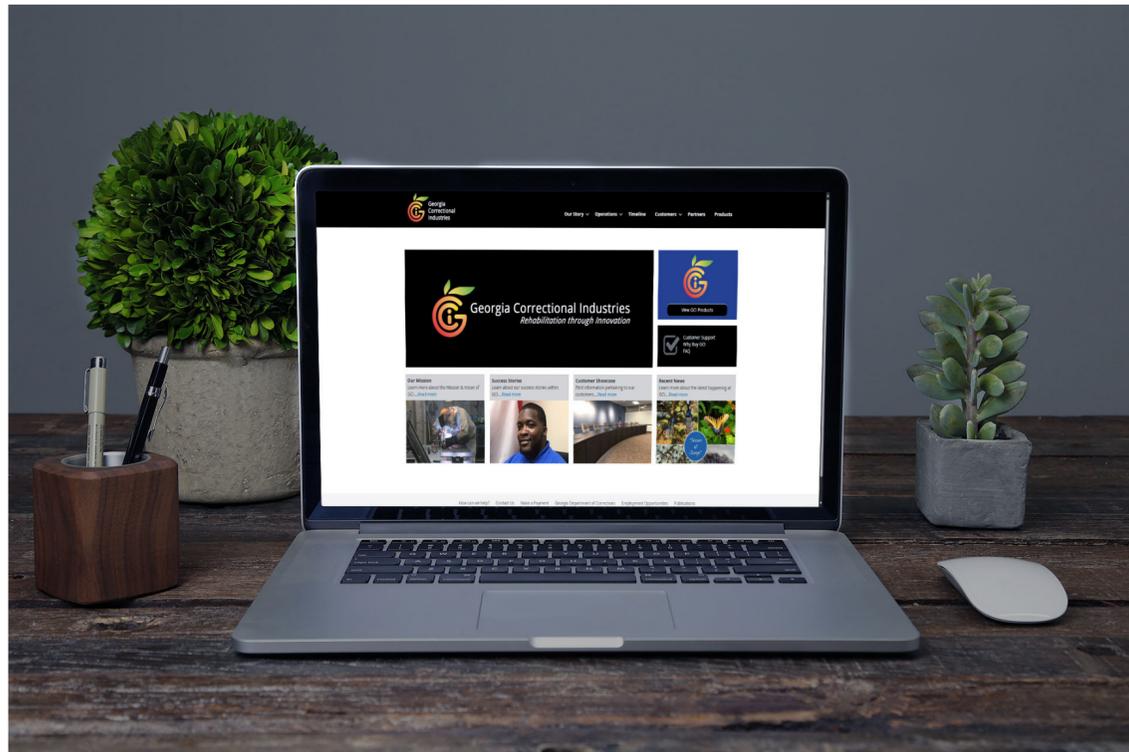
4. Support & Retention Touchpoints

- **Dynamic FAQ cards** in checkout stages (“Need a sample? Click here”).
- **Lifecycle design:** automated cart recovery emails, reorder reminders, “save for later” lists.
- **Physical & digital synergy:** packaging inserts with QR for FAQs or reorder link—melding offline and digital experiences.

5. Accessibility & Performance Enhancements

- **WCAG 2.2 AA-compliant components:** visible focus states, high color contrast, and accessible error messaging.
- **SEO-ready structure:** product schema markup, clean URLs, alt text, and site-map planning to improve findability.
- **Performance checks:** prototype tested for mobile, desktop—loading states, lazy image loading, and responsive images.





Component

Desktop Landing Page

Designing the desktop landing experience for Georgia Correctional Industries (GCI) was about much more than creating an attractive homepage—it was about establishing the conversion gateway for a diverse audience of buyers. For institutional users, the landing page needed to communicate authority, compliance, and trust. For public consumers, it had to deliver a modern, retail-quality experience that made browsing and buying intuitive.

Challenge

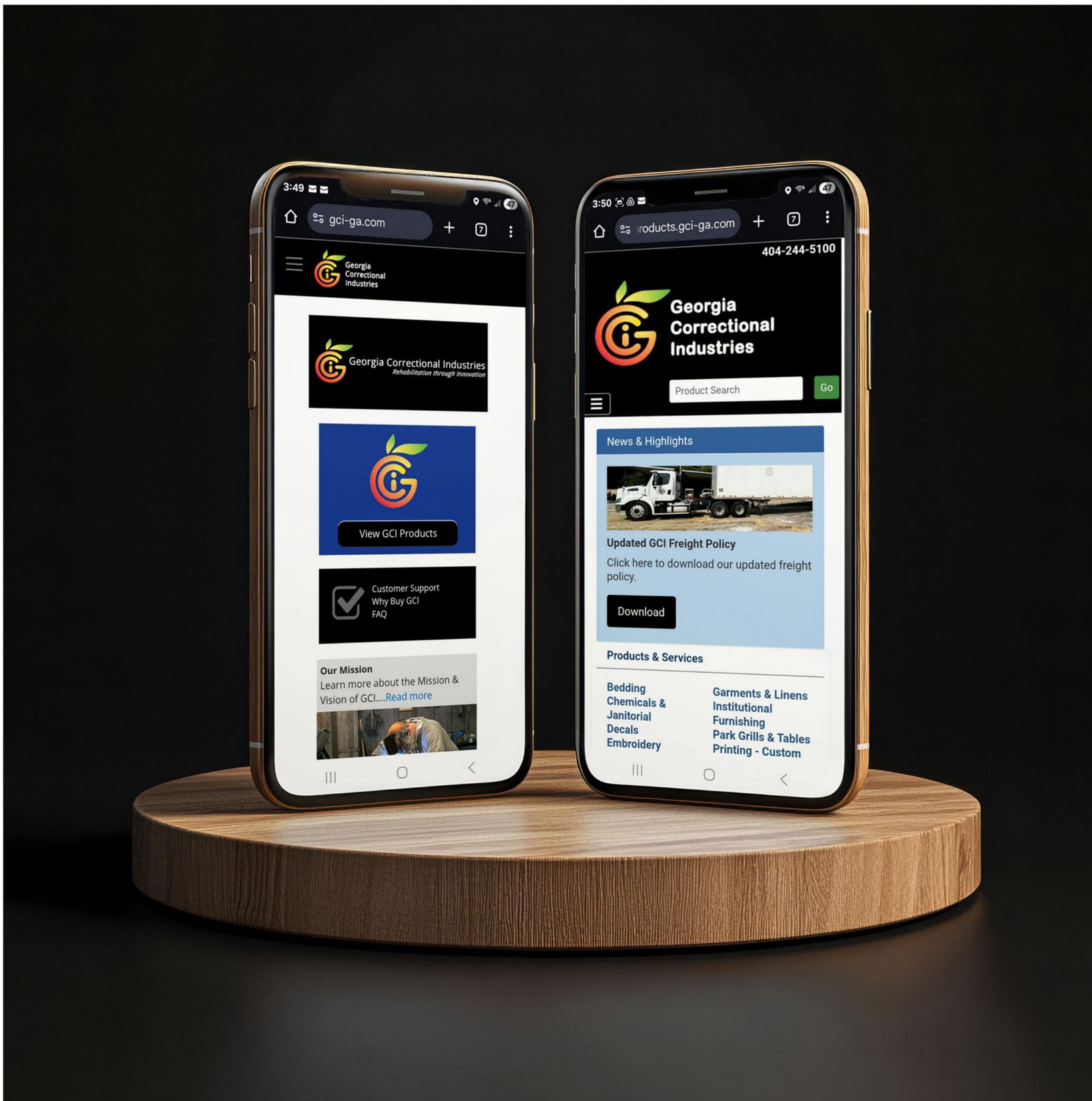
The legacy site functioned like a static catalog, with text-heavy sections and limited entry points into key product categories. Users were often forced to scroll through long lists or click multiple levels deep before reaching relevant products. This slowed decision-making and led to frustration, particularly for procurement officers on tight deadlines.

My Approach

- I approached the desktop landing page as the commerce hub: a page designed to immediately orient users, highlight GCI's product breadth, and funnel them into relevant categories or promotions.
- Hero Area: Featured a high-contrast banner with contextual product photography (e.g., furnishings in offices, uniforms in use), paired with a bold headline and primary CTA button ("Shop Products" / "Browse Categories").
- Category Grid: Introduced a visually balanced grid of top-level categories—Furniture, Apparel, Printing, Signage, Food Service—each with icons, photography, and short descriptors. This flattened navigation and reduced cognitive load.
- Trust Signals: Added a band beneath the hero highlighting WCAG 2.2 AA compliance, tax-exempt ordering, and secure checkout—key reassurance points for both B2B and B2C users.
- Promotional Carousel: Designed an adaptive carousel for seasonal campaigns or featured products, giving GCI the flexibility to spotlight high-demand items.
- Support Section: Integrated FAQs and "Request a Quote" options into the landing page, bringing critical institutional workflows closer to the surface.
- Footer Redesign: Streamlined contact info, customer support links, and compliance documentation into a clean, scannable structure..

Impact

- The redesigned landing page shifted GCI's first impression from a catalog archive to a modern storefront. Buyers can now:
- Reach relevant product categories in 2 clicks instead of 4+.
- See immediate trust signals (secure checkout, ADA compliance, tax-exempt availability).
- Move seamlessly from awareness (hero/category) into consideration (PDPs) and conversion (cart/checkout).



Component

Mobile Landing Page

Designing the mobile landing page for GCI was critical, as analytics consistently show that the majority of B2C users and many institutional buyers begin their journeys on mobile devices. The existing mobile experience was limited—dense menus, small tap targets, and slow load times created frustration and increased abandonment. My role was to reimagine the mobile landing experience as a fast, intuitive, and trustworthy entry point into GCI’s product ecosystem.

Challenge Identified

The original mobile landing page presented several obstacles that limited buyer confidence and slowed engagement. Categories were buried within dropdown menus, forcing users to scroll excessively and guess where products might be located. Small tap targets made navigation frustrating, while the absence of a clear hero message or call-to-action weakened the first impression. In addition, heavy, unoptimized imagery created performance issues, with long load times that were especially problematic for buyers accessing the site in low-bandwidth environments.

My Approach

The mobile landing page was redesigned to serve as a commerce launchpad that blends speed, clarity, and trust:

- **Prominent Hero Section:** Placed a concise value proposition (“Trusted Products. Direct to You.”) with a primary CTA button for “Shop Products” and a secondary link for “Request a Quote.”
- **Category Tiles:** Introduced large, thumb-friendly tiles for core categories (Furniture, Apparel, Printing, Signage, Food Service). These tiles used both iconography and photography for instant recognition.
- **Sticky Navigation & Search:** Designed a fixed search bar and sticky bottom nav with icons for Home, Categories, Cart, and Account—ensuring easy access without endless scrolling.
- **Trust & Compliance Bar:** Inserted a slim banner just below the hero highlighting “Tax-Exempt Orders Accepted,” “WCAG 2.2 Accessible,” and “Secure Checkout” to build confidence immediately.
- **Performance Enhancements:** Optimized images for mobile resolution, implemented lazy loading, and reduced page weight to speed up first-contentful paint.
- **Support Access:** Added a quick “Need Help?” button pinned to the lower corner, linking to FAQs and contact options—meeting both institutional and public buyer needs in real time.

Impact

The redesigned mobile landing page transformed GCI’s digital first impression from catalog-style frustration to a frictionless commerce experience. Mobile users can now:

- Access any product category in two taps or less
- Trust the platform instantly through visible compliance and security signals
- Navigate fluidly with thumb-friendly CTAs, sticky search, and bottom navigation
- Experience faster load times and smoother browsing even in low-bandwidth environments

Reflection

Redesigning Georgia Correctional Industries' digital commerce platform challenged me to think beyond traditional catalog presentation and embrace the full spectrum of direct-to-consumer (DTC) commerce principles within a complex, institutional environment. This project required balancing the expectations of procurement officers, who needed compliance-ready workflows and bulk-order clarity, with public consumers, who expected a seamless, modern shopping experience. Striking this balance sharpened my ability to design flexible systems that serve diverse buyer personas without compromising usability or accessibility.

From a design perspective, this project reinforced the power of information architecture and decision-first product detail pages as the backbone of conversion. By restructuring navigation, creating PDPs that answered buyer questions at a glance, and streamlining checkout with support for tax-exempt and PO-based orders, I learned how small design details—clear microcopy, intuitive flows, visible trust signals—can significantly reduce friction and increase confidence across the funnel.

What I am most proud of is how the project demonstrates my ability to merge institutional credibility with consumer-grade usability. The final platform did more than modernize a catalog; it positioned GCI with a scalable commerce system built to reduce cart abandonment, strengthen buyer trust, and support long-term retention strategies. This reflection underscores my belief that great design is not just about visual polish—it's about aligning user needs, business goals, and technology into an accessible, cohesive, and conversion-focused experience.