



easyJet Flies With Managed Infrastructure Services from Savvis

Overview

Founded in 1995, easyJet is a low-cost European airline with fares designed to make air travel affordable for even the most budget-conscious consumers. The company currently employs 6,200 workers scattered through 18 bases and serves 120 destinations with a fleet of 140 aircraft. In fiscal 2007, the airline averaged 1,000 flights daily, and served 37 million passengers, with revenue of almost 1.8 billion English pounds, or about \$3.6 billion – an increase of 11 percent over 2006 that represented a 48 percent jump in profitability.

Challenge

easyJet always knew it could not achieve its goal of offering the lowest airfares within Europe without effectively leveraging technology. Indeed, IT was “the primary factor behind our ability to grow in profitability,” said Andy Caddy, head of IT architecture at easyJet.

When Caddy joined easyJet in 2004 as operations manager, the IT department was minimal -- just 30 IT workers. But as the company was expanding 15 percent annually, “we’d pretty much outgrown our existing systems,” said Caddy. Moreover, the only constant to the easyJet business was the high rate of change. “We needed to get our systems to a point where they could scale to meet these growth rates.”

A key issue was how to best leverage the limited in-house IT resources to support growth. “If you’ve got a limited number of highly qualified people, you don’t want them changing backup tapes, loading anti-virus software, or patching servers,” said Caddy. “You want them thinking about how to get flight data down from an Airbus, or doing capacity planning for your ecommerce site and other things that grow the value of the business.”

Security and business continuance were also concerns. For years, the main disk storage for all of easyJet’s reservations transactions was located 200 yards off of Luton Airport’s busiest runways. “Anyone who understands anything about disaster recovery knows that the classic nightmare scenario is having an aircraft hit the building,” said Caddy. “Clearly, we needed to do something about this risk.”

Company:

easyJet Airline
Company Limited

Website:

www.easyjet.com

Industry:

Travel

Line of Business:

Low-cost European airline that also offers online car rental and hotel booking services

Target Market:

Cost-conscious travelers

Location:

Luton Airport, Bedfordshire,
England

Summary:

With a mission to keep its overhead low and provide safe and good value airline services, the no-frills airline easyJet relies on a small in-house IT team. However, innovative use of technology would determine whether it succeeded at offering the low fares that characterized its brand. By outsourcing its IT infrastructure to Savvis, easyJet was able to ensure the safety, stability and security of its systems. In the process, the company was able to enhance the overall customer experience and leverage its IT resources to become one of the world’s leading low-cost airlines.

easyJet.com
Flights · Hotels · Cars · Holidays

Solution

With these critical mandates in mind, easyJet embarked upon an intense six-month evaluation of a broad range of managed service providers. Savvis came out on top for a number of reasons, not least of which was that it was able to provide a high availability solution. "We actually run two very different types of organizations: we're an airline, and we're an ecommerce company," said Caddy. "On the ecommerce side, we process millions of pounds worth of transactions an hour, so it's a major problem if the systems go down for even a few minutes," added Caddy. On the airline side, easyJet needs to know where the planes are at all times. By European regulations, if an airline's systems go down for more than four hours, the entire easyJet fleet has to be grounded. "We needed 100 percent uptime for both aspects of our business and Savvis was one of the few vendors that could help deliver and manage a solution to meet this business requirement." continued Caddy.

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**- Andy Caddy
head of IT architecture, easyJet**

Today, Savvis hosts all servers as well as networks throughout easyJet's operations. Currently, more than 300 devices are being managed by Savvis at the operating system level. Savvis also does all the global load balancing for easyJet.com as well as handling all Microsoft Exchange-based email at the application level. Today, easyJet also entrusts Savvis with maintaining all network equipment and providing network connectivity from its data centers out to airports and bases around Europe. The relationship increasingly encompasses strategic consulting as well. "Whenever we get involved in network redesigns, as we're doing in some of our European airports, Savvis takes part," said Caddy.

Benefits

Over the years, easyJet has seen countless examples of how Savvis has delivered value. First and foremost, Savvis has provided a rock solid foundation and the service to match as easyJet has grown and matured. "They care as deeply as I do about whether things are running the way they should. It's bred into them as well as into my own team that we want to be the best airline in Europe. I need to be surrounded by people I can trust and Savvis is right up there with my internal staff." said Caddy.

The Future

easyJet is currently considering utilizing Savvis' new data center, currently being built in the UK, to handle its rapid growth. "This will create some additional strategic technical avenues for us," said Caddy. The airline is also toeing the virtualization waters. "We use virtualization for some of our test and development systems and although the technology is still in its early stages, it's getting off the ground." stated Caddy.

Most importantly, Caddy knows that whatever the future holds, Savvis will help easyJet meet all technical challenges.

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**For more information
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