

SAP Customer Success Story Professional Services – Travel-Related Products and Services



“SAP for Professional Services has proven itself, more than once . . . We can now keep up with and support the business in an efficient, flexible manner. We are proud of this, and the business reaps the benefits.”

Jill Terrell, Director of Corporate Systems, Sabre Holdings Corp.

AT A GLANCE

Company

- Name: Sabre Holdings Corp.
- Location: Southlake, Texas
- Industry: Professional services
- Products and services: Travel-related products and services
- Revenue: US\$2.8 billion (2006)
- Employees: 9,000 (worldwide)
- Web site: www.sabre-holdings.com
- Implementation partner: Internal project

Challenges and Opportunities

- Deregulation – allowing flexibility in pricing and packaging
- Delay between new marketing initiatives and rollout to customers
- Excessive support costs for service delivery

Objective

Install solution to quickly bring innovations to service delivery

SAP® Solution and Services

SAP for Professional Services solution portfolio

Implementation Highlights

- Strong executive sponsorship
- Tight partnership with internal end users
- Structured project management
- Strong internal IT expertise

Why SAP

- Corporate standard
- Off-the-shelf fit
- Flexibility for easy customization where needed

Benefits

- Greater competitive edge, due to ability to quickly roll out service delivery innovations to match market needs
- Easily supported solution
- Rapid ROI

Existing Environment

Mix of SAP® software and internally developed systems

Third-Party Integration

- Database: Oracle
- Hardware: Sun
- Operating system: Sun Solaris

SABRE HOLDINGS

Globally Networked Travel Company Uses SAP for Professional Services to Roll Out Rapid Innovations to Service Delivery and Realize Significant Savings in Support Costs

Sabre Holdings Corp. is a travel company, but it's really focused on delivering business services built on innovation and speed. When it wanted to roll out a new incentive program to its subscriber base of more than 50,000 travel agencies, it turned to the SAP for Professional Services solution portfolio to quickly “productize” the innovation and get it to customers quickly.

The business driver was industry deregulation, which forced Sabre to reevaluate its service delivery model. “Deregulation gave us more freedom to structure different incentives, deals, and contracts with agencies,” says Jill Terrell, director of corporate systems at Sabre. “The problem was that we were using a custom-developed system for incentive management. Someone would have a great idea in marketing, but there was too much lag time and expense in delivering the service to our customers. We were having trouble being responsive to the needs of the business.”

The business was Sabre Travel Network, a Sabre Holdings company. Sabre Travel Network connects travel buyers and sellers around the globe – providing travel agencies with information and content from airlines, hotels, car rental companies, cruise lines, and so on to offer a broad range of travel-related services and products. Sabre offers incentives to travel agencies that commit to a certain level of bookings. “These incentives are one of our largest GL line items, so this has a huge impact on us financially,” Terrell says.

Sabre frequently needs to alter the incentive structure to reflect new business terms with its customers. In addition, Sabre marketing often develops new plans it wants to institute. The SAP® software helps the Southlake, Texas–based company quickly get the changes and innovations into its service delivery model.

“We rely on the power and flexibility of SAP for Professional Services to give the business what it needs,” says Terrell. “The key win is our ability to quickly and flexibly deliver innovations to

“The key win is our ability to quickly and flexibly deliver innovations to match the needs and demands of the marketplace.”

Jill Terrell, Director of Corporate Systems, Sabre Holdings Corp.

match the needs and demands of the marketplace. We can now respond in a fraction of the time it took before. And we’re saving a significant amount of money annually by retiring our old platform. This project supported a relatively rapid ROI.

“Since deregulation, new incentive and billing models have become prevalent in our industry,” continues Terrell. “We can now introduce innovations to service delivery in an efficient, timely fashion. SAP for Professional Services has been a critical component in the success of our business.”

Sure Fit Right Out of the Box

Sabre implemented SAP for Professional Services off the shelf to accommodate the critical components of the initiative. “We were very pleased we could move this functionality onto standard SAP

“. . . our staff members tell us they like SAP software and prefer it over other applications.”

Jill Terrell, Director of Corporate Systems, Sabre Holdings Corp.

software without extensive customization,” Terrell says. “This makes it easy to support. Also, our staff members tell us they like SAP software and prefer it over other applications.”

There were other dividends as well. Says Terrell, “Because there was no need to train staff on additional systems, and because we could access readily available SAP skill sets worldwide, we were able to quickly recognize a lower cost structure.”

Sabre met all timeline and budget targets for the project. The success was particularly impressive given the sudden emergence of a new business initiative. “We established what we call the

“We brought the new system up, and on day one it worked. Things went so smoothly it was a nonevent.”

Jill Terrell, Director of Corporate Systems, Sabre Holdings Corp.

‘Efficient Access Solution’ – it’s a deal we made with the airlines and the travel agencies that benefits all parties. One of the terms of the agreement impacts agency incentives,” Terrell says. “This strategic requirement came up at the same time we were moving the incentives functionality to SAP for Professional Services.

“We had to decide whether to delay the new incentives innovation or make all the changes at the same time. We opted to do the latter. We brought the new system up, and on day one it worked. Things went so smoothly it was a nonevent. Even though the new requirement created a lot of extra work, we were still able to maintain our schedule.”

That meant first-mover advantage. “We were first in the marketplace with this, gaining a competitive edge by quickly delivering innovation to our service offering,” Terrell says. “It proved we could satisfy the needs of the business in a timely manner.”

That’s how the corporate systems group within Sabre meets and exceeds its charter for the business – by using SAP for Professional Services to rapidly innovate around the services Sabre delivers to its travel agency subscriber base.

“SAP for Professional Services has proven itself, more than once, by enabling us to be very responsive to continuously changing business needs,” Terrell says. “We can now keep up with and support the business in an efficient, flexible manner. We are very proud of this, and the business reaps the benefits.”