



RED HAT DELIVERS UNMATCHED PERFORMANCE FOR SABRE HOLDINGS, TRAVELOCITY

FAST FACTS

Industry	Travel
Geography	Global
Business Challenge	To increase performance and cost effectiveness, and expand scalability of the business' rapidly evolving IT architecture for its high-performance environment, requiring extremely high uptime for tens of thousands of transactions per second, 24x7, 365 days per year
Migration Path	Unix to Red Hat Enterprise Linux
Software	Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5
Hardware	HPx86 and Intel
Benefits	Achieved system reliability, 3x performance gains and unmatched scalability – all at a fraction of the cost – while standardizing its IT infrastructure on Red Hat Enterprise Linux



BACKGROUND

Sabre Holdings is a privately held world leader in the travel marketplace that is owned by private equity firms, Silver Lake Partners and TPG. The company retails travel products and provides distribution and technology solutions for the travel industry – the world's largest industry. Headquartered in Southlake, Texas, the company has approximately 9,000 employees located in 59 countries.

In 2007, Sabre Holdings earned approximately \$3 billion in revenue as it supported travelers, travel agents, corporations, and travel suppliers around the world through its three companies:

- Travelocity, a leading provider of consumer-direct travel services for the leisure and business traveler. Travelocity has become one of the largest travel companies in the world, with gross travel bookings of more than \$10 billion in 2007, thanks to powerful online

shopping technology and its commitment to being the traveler's champion with the most comprehensive and proactive guarantee in the industry.

- Sabre Travel Network, which markets and distributes travel-related products and services through the Sabre Global Distribution System (GDS), is a ready-built efficient marketplace that connects more travel suppliers, including hundreds of airlines and thousands of hotels, with more than 55,000 travel agency locations and millions of consumers booking travel online.
- Sabre Airline Solutions, the world's leading provider of integrated solutions and services for airlines and airports, helping companies generate more revenue by optimizing performance in 14 key areas of airline operations. More than more than 200 carriers and 100 airports worldwide use Sabre Airline Solutions to better market their schedules, sell their products, serve their customers and operate efficiently.

Sabre has long been known for innovating. InformationWeek named the Sabre central reservation system—the first of its kind ever built at the time—as one of the top 10 greatest software ever written. But it's not just technology for technology's sake. Sabre's technologists also think like business people to solve real business problems, from inventing automated reservations and yield management systems, to inventing new industries such as online travel, online business travel booking, and others used widely today in the travel industry and beyond. Today, Sabre is streamlining airport check-in systems, developing new ways for hotels to connect with customers and forging new revenue streams for online booking, just to name a few.

CHALLENGE

Sabre solves some of the most challenging problems in the world's most demanding industry. For years, Sabre used proprietary solutions to support its advanced IT architecture. Internet-based travel bookings have increasingly gained acceptance among leisure and business travelers, and travelers' escalating demands for more services and better options have driven up costs for the worldwide travel leader. To capitalize on its enormous growth opportunity, the company needed an infrastructure that was faster, more scalable and allowed them to contain growing costs. Looking to increase performance and reduce technology costs associated with proprietary solutions, Sabre decided to investigate open source alternatives to help it face the relentless conditions of a fast-moving, dynamic travel industry.

"While operating the largest travel distribution service in the world, we develop solutions that must withstand what is perhaps the highest sustainable volumes anywhere, peaking at 32,000 transactions per second, available 24x7, with five-nines uptime. It's always a peak business hour somewhere in the world," said Robert Wiseman, chief technology officer at Sabre Holdings. "Fewer other systems anywhere require more rigor, but with Red Hat we are able to build stronger and smarter systems with our global customers in mind."

SOLUTION

Enabling more than 32,000 transactions per second, Sabre's IT infrastructure demanded extremely high uptime percentages. If its systems were to experience downtime, the impact would affect flights and bookings worldwide.

To improve the stability, performance, and cost-effectiveness of its IT infrastructure and to ensure reliability for its customers, Sabre turned to open source solutions. It evaluated the leading Linux offerings on the market, but ultimately chose Red Hat for its established market leadership and renowned support offerings. With Red Hat, Sabre also discovered the power of the developer community that could provide reliable, consistent updates and fixes that could be incorporated in realtime.

"Red Hat Enterprise Linux is our operating system of choice. Compared to proprietary Unix/RISC solutions, our testing has shown that Red Hat Enterprise Linux on Intel performs three times faster and at a fraction of previous costs."

**-Robert Wiseman,
chief technology officer at Sabre Holdings**

"Sabre Holdings selected Red Hat as the IT solution that would allow us to run all our businesses most effectively. Our Travelocity customers use our services for the content, speed, price, and presentation, not for the operating system our business runs on," said Josh Hartmann, chief technology officer at Travelocity. "Red Hat provides a proficient and effervescent experience for our customers, who don't even realize that Red Hat is there. And that's the way it should be."



With millions of online customers generating tens of thousands of transactions per second, Sabre Holdings has deployed Red Hat Enterprise Linux on thousands of HP x86-based servers and it continues to expand its use of Red Hat solutions today.

“Red Hat Enterprise Linux is our corporate standard – all new systems are required to deploy on Red Hat Enterprise Linux,” said Wiseman. “Compared to proprietary Unix/RISC solutions, our testing has shown that Red Hat Enterprise Linux on Intel performs three times faster and at a fraction of the cost.”

Two years ago, Sabre acquired lastminute.com, a leader in European online travel, and today, Sabre is in the process of migrating all of lastminute.com’s servers to its corporate standard, Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.

BENEFITS

Since migrating to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Sabre Holdings has benefited from system reliability, increased performance, and scalability – and at a fraction of the cost.

Red Hat Enterprise Linux has enabled Sabre to standardize its IT architecture, consisting of thousands of systems worldwide, across all three of its companies’ IT infrastructures. “With decades of experience in the travel service industry, we built a culture of uptime and reliable performance. Standardizing our operating system on Red Hat Enterprise Linux has allowed us to focus on our core business competencies,” said Wiseman. “Sabre relies on Red Hat as our corporate standard operating system for our mission-critical open systems.”

“Red Hat has allowed us to horizontally scale our systems with the ability to drive tens of thousands of transactions per second, 24x7, 365 days a year,” said Hartmann.

“Red Hat is the leader in the marketplace and offers the performance and stability to drive our high-transaction business at a high economic value.”

In addition to improving performance and cost effectiveness since migrating to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, Sabre also further strengthened its position as an innovative technology leader and employer. Working with open source technology partners has allowed Sabre to recruit and retain the best talent. “People want a challenge, they want to build things that matter, and they find travel a very appealing industry. We sit in a very cool place in a very cool industry and work on very cool projects,” Wiseman said. “Our company is recognized as a great employer and innovator with a great culture. Our team at Sabre Holdings is unparalleled in the industry, and our use of open source software helps us attract the best IT leaders.”

As it continues to evolve its IT architecture, Sabre plans to incorporate additional Red Hat solutions and is currently assessing Red Hat integrated virtualization technology.

“We are beginning to take a close look at Red Hat’s virtualization capabilities and have been impressed with its recent virtualization management technology development. We’re also interested in flexible deployments of Red Hat on Amazon’s elastic cloud,” said Wiseman. “We value Red Hat as a long-term partner in our development of Sabre Holdings’ corporate IT goals because of the leadership role Red Hat plays in the open source community.”



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