



LEADING TRAVEL COMPANY BOOKS WEBMETHODS TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Challenge

Fast-growing Costa Crociere wanted to improve its booking process to handle more service options and more reservations than ever before. Travel agents and customers needed to be able to make a reservation through any channel. Behind the scenes, corporate systems needed to be integrated into the booking process.

Solution

Costa Crociere found the webMethods integration platform was just the right ticket for making its booking process more flexible. Now the company offers greater conveniences for travelers and connects in new ways with travel agents and other business partners.

Benefits

- Some 630,000 requests a day handled via Web services
- Increased customer services—for example, customers can arrange additional travel without ever leaving the Costa booking system
- Increased integration with other systems
- Better decision-making, thanks to real-time information exchange
- Improved accuracy—all guest bookings are profiled accurately



The Costa Crociere Group is the largest Italian holiday corporation and Europe's No. 1 cruise line. With a 60-year history, the group has the largest fleet of any of Europe's operators, representing a total investment of 9.6 billion Euros. Ships operate in the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, the Baltic Sea, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, the United Arab Emirates, the Far East, the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. In 2010, Costa Crociere rated in the Top 10 for profitability and No. 49 in sales in an independent study of 3,700 Italian leading companies.

Get There Faster.™

“Thanks to webMethods, we have been able to manage some 630,000 requests a day via Web services, originating from all electronic booking channels and directed at our booking system.”

Franco Caraffi | Director, Reservation & On Board Systems | Costa Crociere

A passion for customer service

The Costa Crociere Group is focused on meeting the every need of more than 2 million annual holiday travelers. It has a passion for customer service. Innovation, tradition, creativity and teamwork are also fundamental corporate values.

With such a large number of travelers to serve, the group's booking system is equivalent to the ordering system of a large manufacturer. Costa's ERP system must guarantee efficient functionality to reduce the time it takes to manage bookings, and it must constantly adapt to new business developments.

The system stores and manages all the essential information about the cruise holidays chosen by customers: the itinerary, cabin type, personal details and additional services, such as flights, transfers and hotels. The job of managing this huge amount of information is further complicated by the fact that the booking system also offers options for purchasing cruises and associated services that are open for varying periods, prior to booking confirmation. If a booking is not confirmed, all cabins and other options must be made available in real-time to other potential customers.

With all of these demands, Costa Crociere's IT department needed to:

- Improve the booking process in the face of an ever-increasing number of requests for options and bookings
- Integrate corporate systems into the booking process
- Enable both travel agents and consumers to make a reservation through any channel

Getting onboard with webMethods Integration Server

To achieve this goal, the IT department decided to create software applications that would allow easy integration of the group's booking system with other Web systems for purchasing cruises. In

order to ensure these software applications were efficient, quick to develop and easy to maintain, Costa Crociere chose the webMethods integration platform. The platform made it possible to integrate and “show” software services via Web services, quite simply and effortlessly, in order to use these in different applications.

In particular, the webMethods solution facilitates:

- Management of the sales process for the Web site called Costa Click, which is specifically aimed at travel agents
- Increased integration with travel/leisure portals (Web affiliation and cruise engines)
- Extending the whole booking service to the Global Distribution System, the booking system used by travel agents and other business partners, such as credit card companies and insurers
- A guarantee of greater flexibility, real-time operations and the possibility of using satellite links to integrate onboard systems with Costa enhanced processes

Managing more requests with ease

Explained Franco Caraffi, director of the Reservation & Onboard Systems, “Thanks to webMethods, we have been able to manage some 630,000 requests a day via Web services, originating from all electronic booking channels and directed at our booking system.”

webMethods has also made it possible to book complementary services for cruises, such as flights and rail travel, in a completely automatic, user-friendly way, so that customers can make the travel arrangements necessary to reach the ship without having to exit the Costa booking system.

The webMethods platform is also used as an integrator for the Costa CRM system so the company can recognize and accurately profile all the guests' booking with Costa day by day. Caraffi affirmed that webMethods is the ideal business

infrastructure for the enterprises of the future. One of the factors driving the success of a business is the speed at which it makes decisions and manages situations. Costa Crociere S.p.A. has taken on webMethods to transmit from ship to shore, in real-time, all the necessary information about sales transactions, which can then be analyzed immediately to make the right decisions.

KEY COMPONENTS

webMethods Integration Server is a standards-based integration platform. It “speaks” any technology so all of Web services, JMS messaging, packaged and custom apps as well as legacy systems can communicate efficiently.

ABOUT SOFTWARE AG

Software AG is the global leader in Business Process Excellence. Our 40 years of innovation include the invention of the first high-performance transactional database, Adabas; the first business process analysis platform, ARIS; and the first B2B server and SOA-based integration platform, webMethods.

We offer our customers end-to-end Business Process Management (BPM) solutions delivering low Total-Cost-of-Ownership and high ease of use. Our industry-leading brands, ARIS, webMethods, Adabas, Natural, CentraSite and IDS Scheer Consulting, represent a unique portfolio encompassing: process strategy, design, integration and control; SOA-based integration and data management; process-driven SAP implementation; and strategic process consulting and services.

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