AEROPLAN CASE STUDY

New technology solutions and web tools power 20% growth at Aeroplan
Ambition: Aeroplan GmbH embarked on an ambitious plan three years ago to bring more speed, accuracy and automation to its internal operations. The new Sabre Red Workspace and a new internet booking engine (IBE) powered by Sabre Dev Studio has improved page responsiveness and increased bookability. The transformation is working: business is up 20%, and Aeroplan is ready for more growth in the future.

You can see the friendliness in Patric Khatibi's smile, and you can hear the hospitality in his voice when you ask him about running a travel agency.

His eyes light up as he talks about the joys of being a family-owned business, knowing customers by name, and working in an open floor plan with no private offices.

“We all sit in one big room so there are no secrets,” says Khatibi. “We work hard, we laugh, and we take care of our customers. If you need help you ask and we all contribute. It’s like one big family – we’re in this together.”

His father Kamran Khatibi started in the Cologne-based agency nearly 35 years ago. He founded the business to serve Iranians who wanted to travel between Europe and the Middle East. Farsi and Arabic are still heard often in the Aeroplan office.

When Patric Khatibi and another long-time employee, Eric Engelhardt, took over management of the company five years ago, they knew they wanted to change some things and their existing travel technology platform was at the top of the list.

“We do most of our programming in-house and we've even built our own internet booking engine,” says Engelhardt.

Aeroplan Bets on Sabre to Power Growth - And It’s Paying Off.

Aeroplan does its own programming and web development. It chose Sabre for its scalable platform, easy-to-use API’s, and ongoing investment in research and support.

Aeroplan built its own internet booking engine (IBE) and even makes it available to other travel agencies as a white-label IBE solution.

Aeroplan’s business is up 20% since making the switch to Sabre. With Sabre Red Workspace solutions and Sabre Web API’s, Aeroplan can offer more bookable travel options and faster page loading, making it easier for online customers to find and buy the travel options they want.

“Technical features and functionality are the core of how we sell and they are mission-critical for us. Sabre has everything we need under one roof.”
**Action:** Family Business Thrives with Hard Work and Smart Technology

“We are a family business and we treat our employees and customers like family,” says Khatibi.

Aeroplan’s 30 employees currently arrange travel for a mix of business, leisure and meeting/incentive clients who need travel within Europe and around the globe.

A big part of this volume is driven by Aeroplan’s own website and its white-label IBE for smaller agencies.

Khatibi says he and Engelhardt have always recognized the value of having the best technology tools.

“All the travel marketplace providers have great people that we like and trust, but Sabre has the best combination of people, products and process,” says Engelhardt. “The Sabre tools are easier to work with and optimize for our needs compared to others out there right now. We get more done and we deliver better service.”

Aeroplan uses the Sabre Red Workspace for desktop booking which gives every agent enhanced views, integrated content, and a streamlined itinerary creation tool.

“We also get a larger selection of ancillaries and air travel options through Sabre which improves book-ability,” says Khatibi. “The airlines, seats, classes and amenities we’re trying to book are available more often on the first try with Sabre.”

For its IBE, Aeroplan uses Sabre Dev Studio, a portfolio of over 150 APIs, software development kits (SDKs) and notification services.

“We built our own ticketing automation covering quality control and exchanges,” says Engelhardt. “Sabre lets us prototype and test our code quickly so we can develop and deliver more quickly. The library of API options provided by Sabre is well beyond other travel marketplaces.”

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*Patric Khatibi, Aeroplan*
Khatibi likes that the Sabre culture matches the Aeroplan culture. The promise of responsiveness and support is demonstrated each day.

“When we call Sabre, they answer, just like we do when our customers call us,” says Khatibi. “There are no excuses. Solutions and answers are found fast.”

While Aeroplan has been well-known in its home city of Cologne, Khatibi and Engelhardt have plans to extend that reputation across Europe and the Middle East with a new enhanced customer experience.

“We know that we’ve got to constantly be adapting the way we do business both offline and online,” says Engelhardt. “Sabre is helping us book faster, keep customers happy, and reduce back-office manual tasks. When we save time, we can provide more attentive service for a better overall customer experience. That good experience then spreads through referrals which are more powerful, and much less expensive than online ads.”

The new Aeroplan IBE, powered by Sabre, should boost growth nicely in the coming years.

“Our volume has already increased by 20% since switching to Sabre, and now we know there’s room for more growth with a booking engine that works faster,” says Khatibi. “The investment with Sabre has been substantial but the return on our investment has been exactly as promised, and much more than we expected.”

Outcomes: When Offline and Online Worlds Combine

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