

The Sabre logo is displayed in white, bold, italicized font on a red background that tapers to the right. The background of the entire slide is a scenic view of a coastal city with turquoise water in the foreground, a rocky shoreline with palm trees and buildings in the middle ground, and the two towers of the Burj Khalifa in the background under a clear sky.

Sabre

Case study Rehlat.com

Sabre's advanced Air Shopping solutions power the rapid growth of one of the Middle East's premier travel agencies

Rehlat's new online offer

Rehlat.com is a new online travel agency (OTA) catering to the Middle East. It is the online travel business of long-established travel company Rehlat (which first opened in 1994 and means 'travel' in Arabic). Rehlat has more than 20 offices across Kuwait, UAE, India and Egypt.

AMBITION: Rehlat is one of the best known travel agencies in the Middle East, with an extensive presence across the region. Towards the end of 2013 it began a pioneering move to enter the online travel space, specifically for consumers in the Middle East.

Rehlat developed the initial 'proof of concept' for Rehlat.com, which it then steadily built on over the next few years, before finally launching Rehlat.com as a fully-fledged OTA in the middle of 2016.

While Rehlat's offline agencies specialise in corporate travel and contracts with large companies and Government agencies, Rehlat.com offers travel services to the general public. Moving online provides an opportunity for Rehlat to grow its business by targeting a new market sector.

Online travel agencies are a key emerging market in the Middle East that's not yet fully

established. It's only been in the last two or three years agencies have started to add online services to their traditional bricks and mortar offerings.

Rehlat wanted to ensure its OTA was built on the best technology available to make it superior to anything else available in the Middle East.

The ethos behind Rehlat.com is to provide a high quality user experience, with simplicity at the heart of the bookings process.

The website needed to be straightforward and robust while providing a broad range of cost effective travel options for its users.

Rehlat.com explored different options to power its booking engine, but experienced several issues with the development and the system, so they decided to enter a multi-GDS environment and partner with Sabre, also benefiting from access to a broader range of online services.

Top-tier support and customer service

One of the things that impressed Rehlat the most about Sabre is the world-class support it receives. Sabre is not only there to assist with day-to-day issues but has become a trusted partner to Rehlat, helping it rapidly expand to new regions in the Middle East and truly enhance the quality and reliability of its OTA.

"When we approached Sabre they showed us what was possible," says Bader Al-Bader, CEO, Rehlat.com. "Sabre gave us great technical assistance and, from the beginning of our relationship, we felt they were the right partner to team up with. The support Sabre provided during integration went way above and beyond. Two Sabre staff visited our offices in India to personally guide us through how to do everything. This was followed by weekly calls to check our progress and they continue to monitor on-going performance to ensure everything is working to the optimum levels. It's world class support."



2016
Rehlat.com
launched



60,000
Bookings using Sabre,
Jan-April '17



20+
Rehlat offices
in the Middle East



Microseconds
Time to return search
results using Sabre

Value for money

Rehlat chose Sabre to complement and expand on its previous GDS. Both Rehlat and Rehlat.com now use Sabre's Bargain Finder Max for its air travel bookings to provide access to a plethora of lower-priced itineraries for available flights.

ACTION: A reliable, stable GDS offering excellent value flights to Rehlat's customers

Rehlat made the decision to bring in Sabre's products and expertise to support the company in its growth and vision, after meeting their team at "Connect Online" Dubai 2015, an event during which Sabre brought together their experts with like-minded leaders from prominent travel and tech companies across the Middle East to provide a deeper view of Sabre's advanced technology platform, automation solutions and unmatched service offering and how it can accelerate and optimize the agencies' online businesses.

Bargain Finder Max is an ideal solution for Rehlat as it offers simplicity of search and booking and affordability of flight options to the users of Rehlat.com, as well as an extensive range of lower cost air flights for Rehlat's offline agencies.

"Bargain Finder Max is great for us and does everything we need to do right now," says Aniyam Nambiar, Deputy CEO, Rehlat.com and General Manager of ABTT.

"It's so lightweight, easy to use and flexible, and filters out results based on our requirements. You can select how many results you'd like to receive as well as optimize the results depending on many different factors including the duration of the flight, the price and criteria such as which airlines you like to use. Sabre is also equipped to deliver great breadth and depth of content through their rich marketplace and merchandising solutions."

As well as benefiting from Sabre's technology, Rehlat.com has made good use of its partnership with Sabre to help it establish connections with fulfilment agencies. These have opened up the market for them and enabled a significant expansion in the scale of the company's operations in the Middle East.



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ANIYAM NAMBIAR
Deputy CEO, Rehlat.com
General Manager of ABTT

"In some of our offices we work through different agencies, and Sabre is the company that introduced us to them, which has been invaluable," says Bader Al-Bader, CEO, Rehlat.com. "Sabre really opened the door for us at these partner agencies and they still do, going as far as travelling with us to Egypt to help us get established there."

The relationship is getting ever stronger as time progresses, adds Nambiar: "They've introduced us to different products, best practices and new partners. We're going forward with Sabre."

Increase in sales

OUTCOMES: 300% increase in sales, a stable GDS and unrivalled support

Rehlat started working with Sabre at the end of 2015, when it began integrating Bargain Finder Max and Sabre Web Services into its OTA. It made the transition to Sabre in October 2016, five months ahead of schedule, and since then its sales continue to grow month-on-month. Sales are now up 300% since they began using Sabre.

The speed in which it was able to integrate Sabre impressed Rehlat.com, with Al-Bader saying Sabre was straightforward to incorporate into Rehlat.com and very flexible to use. It has been less than a year since going live, and doesn't seem to have been two years since the partnership started. But it's already powering a considerable proportion of Rehlat's sales. In the first four months of this year alone, Rehlat has made more than 60,000 bookings through Sabre.

Rehlat.com singles out for praise the speed Bargain Finder Max returns results, describing it as "in milliseconds". It is also impressed by the stability of the solution which is helping the company grow its booking numbers and eliminate downtime.

The unrivalled level of personalised support Sabre provides continues to astound Rehlat. "The support has been world beating," says Al-Bader. "I didn't know the level of support Sabre offers was even possible – it's set the bar really high for any technology partner."

"We wouldn't be where we are without Sabre," adds Nambiar. "Most recently, they have started bringing Sabre colleagues over from Europe to the Middle East to meet with us and guide us on best practice. OTAs are much more advanced in Europe so we've been using their strengths to help us improve. It's a great relationship that I think is good for Sabre too – when we grow, they grow."

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BADER AL-BADER
CEO, Rehlat.com



300%
Increase in sales
since adding Sabre



2 million
Monthly visitors
to Rehlat.com

Sabre

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