Building and deploying Airlink´s comprehensive e-commerce platform in the public cloud

Client Overview

Airlink is a leading private airline based out of South Africa that gained prominence as a feeder airline between smaller towns and large airport hubs across the African continent. Airlink caters to more than 1.5 million passengers annually with over 60,000 flight schedules across its own and partner networks in the region.

The Scenario

For 23 years, Airlink was marketed as a franchise carrier of an international airline. Within this framework, it operated with restrictive systems that impaired its ability to grow and retail effectively. Airlink decided to exit the franchise agreement, opening opportunities to grow its business independently, improve agility, accelerate decision-making, and drive independent revenue streams.
This required a systems overhaul and an urgent digital transformation to deploy comprehensive e-commerce capabilities, enhance online presence, drive a channel shift, and maximize revenue opportunities.

The Challenges

Building a competitive edge

Airlink´s website had limited e-commerce capabilities to promote its product offering. To support the airline´s growth ambitions, transitioning to an advanced e-commerce platform was critical to effectively compete in the marketplace. Expert advisory was needed to build a secure, resilient, and scalable platform to meet growth expectations, and ensure disruption-free operations of the new digital sales channel.

Achieving on-demand scalability

Airlink was anticipating high volume bookings growth through its website once it was launched. Hence the site would have to be able to scale on-demand to meet the increased transaction volumes from the markets it operated in.

Developing a resilient and reliable infrastructure

Aligned with the technology transformation, Airlink needed to set up a business support structure with robust processes for its e-commerce channel operations. The underlying infrastructure for the new portal needed to ensure optimized performance and availability. Any downtime would impact the customer experience and result in lost revenues.

Ensuring data protection

In the digital world, protecting customer privacy and securing payment processing information and infrastructure are of paramount importance. Information security infrastructure, policies, and processes to guard against cyber threats are the first line of defense. Airlink needed to comply with global privacy and data security standards to minimize the risks associated with the deployment of its digital channels.

The Solution

IBS Software was selected as the consulting partner to guide Airlink throughout its digital transformation. Based on the airline´s needs and evolving market trends, IBS Software consultants built and deployed a powerful e-commerce platform in the Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud. This was important to future-proof its IT landscape and retailing model.

Our consultants ensured the smooth integration of the new e-commerce platform with the airline´s booking engine and various third-party applications.

Applying their deep domain expertise in airline technology, IBS consultants provided best practices knowledge in AWS cloud migration, software development, and the establishment of standard operational processes. Our consultants also guided Airlink in critical areas such as payments processing, risk and fraud management, and improving the overall user experience.

Outcomes of the Solution

Digital transformation enablement

IBS Software built a powerful and fully integrated digital ecosystem to help Airlink offer innovative services and responsive features across B2C and B2B customers. The entire user journey from search to bookings and post-booking activities, such as tax invoice creation, was handled with ease through the new e-commerce platform and associated digital systems.

Seamless scalability

The AWS cloud environment on which IBS Software deployed the e-commerce platform allowed Airlink to enjoy the benefits of seamless scalability for its digital systems across peak traffic periods. AWS´s flexible infrastructure offered on-demand scalability, resulting in significant savings by avoiding substantial upfront and continued infrastructure investments. The airline was able to scale as transaction patterns demanded.

Resilient infrastructure

By hosting Airlink´s platform on the AWS cloud, the airline enjoys a reliable and resilient digital infrastructure that guarantees high levels of availability and uptime. This is key to preventing disruption in its business operations and associated revenue leakage.

Secure customer experience

IBS Software ensured that Airlink was equipped to manage information security risks. Our consultants applied best practices in cloud migration and firewall reinforcement, as well as the optimization of security features to create a safe operating environment. Best in class payment, fraud prevention, and risk management solutions were implemented to minimize risk for the airline and its customers.

The IBS Advantage

IBS Software's expertise in developing digital eco-systems and cloud-based e-commerce platforms for large airlines was instrumental to quickly generating a return on investment for Airlink. The consulting engagement allowed Airlink to acquire comprehensive e-commerce capabilities and streamline business operations in the AWS cloud. Project consultants mentored Airlink with technological and organizational best practices to set up an efficient business unit that is driving the airline´s digital growth.

"IBS Software has been a critical partner for the development and support of Flyairlink.com and our Enterprise Integration Platforms. We are consistently impressed with their deep knowledge and dedication towards Airlink. Working closely with our team, IBS Software is completely aligned with our strategy and contributes meaningfully to it, consistently delivering innovative and value-added solutions to our business. Airlink and the IBS team have adopted a truly collaborative and agile approach in the development and ongoing enhancement of our platforms. We value the ongoing commitment and continued contribution by IBS Software to our growth path."

Jenean Green
Head of IT - Airlink

About IBS Software

IBS Software is a leading SaaS solutions provider to the travel industry globally, managing mission-critical operations for customers in the aviation, tour & cruise and hospitality industries. IBS Software's solutions for the aviation industry cover fleet & crew operations, aircraft maintenance, passenger services, loyalty programs, staff travel and air-cargo management. IBS Software also runs a real time B2B and B2C distribution platform providing hotel room inventory, rates and availability to a global network of hospitality companies and channels. For the tour and cruise industry, IBS provides a comprehensive, customer-centric, digital platform that covers onshore, online and on-board solutions. IBS Software is a Blackstone portfolio company and operates from 15 offices across the world.

Further information can be found at https://www.ibsplc.com