

CASE STUDY



Yatra has been able to offer packaged deals, customized offerings to different segments of customers after the deployment of Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

Yatra has achieved near 100 per cent uptime at its call center.

Yatra helps businesses and consumers to book airline, railway and bus tickets and reserve hotel rooms and car rentals by calling Yatra's call center, or by going to the Internet website www.yatra.com.

Yatra provides travel-related information, pricing, availability and reservations for airlines, hotels, railway, buses and car rentals across 5000 large cities and small rural areas throughout India.

Yatra's multi-language customer service center enables business and family/leisure travelers to make well-informed and cost effective bookings 24 hours a day or night, 365 days a year, through its online, call center and mobile support. The company also offers free travel-related news and travel advisory services to a wide range of people.

Yatra's investors include Norwest Venture Partners (NVP), a leading venture capital firm, Reliance Capital (a member of Reliance Group headed by Anil Ambani), and Television 18 Group (TV18, India's premier news broadcaster). The company has developed cutting-edge, proprietary travel technology and establishing close partnerships with travel suppliers in India.

Yatra Online Pvt. Ltd.

Number of employees	: 220
Years in business	: Less than a year
Number of countries in which the company conducts business	: One
Total company revenue for latest year reported	: NA
Company product	: Travel-related services
Company business goal	: To be a comprehensive travel portal
Factors that led to the success of the company	: Better customer experience, more customer engaging points, operational excellence, customized products and services

FAST FACTS

Industry: Travel Industry

Challenges:

- A secure, reliable and cost-effective platform to run mission critical enterprise applications and ensure secure transactions.
- Enhance customer experience at all points of contact.

Solution:

Platform: Red Hat Enterprise Linux

Hardware: HP Blade Servers

Benefits:

- Better tracking of customer traffic
- Enhanced customer experience
- Yatra customers benefit from first priority bookings and customized travel packages and deals
- Better and quicker development of customized travel applications

THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The advent and fast-paced acceptability of the Internet has opened up new avenues for companies to sell traditional products and service and consequently the e-commerce market for jobs, travel, entertainment, real estate, matrimonials has taken off in a big way in India. In the past couple of years, online travel has benefitted

from a number of 'offline' industry-led activities. The emergence of low-cost air carriers has fueled the cause of domestic air travel. The easy and hassle-free availability of tickets through the Indian Railways website has boosted the prospects for the nascent but high-potential e-commerce industry.

CHALLENGES

Says Manish Amin, Co-Founder, Yatra, "The establishment of Yatra this year could not have been more timely. More and more people are traveling everyday for business as well as pleasure. Holidaying now is an integral part of the lives of many Indians and the biggest beneficiary has been the travel industry. The premise was to replicate the success that online travel has had in US and Europe in an emerging and fast growing market like India. The Indian market was also moving from a more information-centric presence to a more transactions-driven market for online services and product categories. The challenges for a one-stop portal like Yatra were going to be huge. For airline tickets, we had to configure fares and availability options of all domestic carriers apart from making bus and railway tickets to businesses and consumers. However, the delivery system and a secure, reliable transaction mechanism had to be in place to attract and retain customers."

Towards this endeavor, Yatra struck a number of partnerships and alliances with leading travel suppliers and allied vendors. The back-end processes had to be functioning smoothly to ensure the seamless availability of the set of services to customers. Today, Yatra has interfaces with all the major airlines. Since Yatra had firmly hedged its bets on the 'package deal' differentiator, it had tied up with 1300 hotels across 170 Indian cities. This has enabled Yatra to "sweeten" the deal even more for online purchasers who look for hotel accommodations/reservations along with air tickets. For transactions too, Yatra chose to look just beyond the credit card option and accepts payments through direct bank credits, ITZ cash card and Cash-On-Delivery too. The intent has also been to enhance the customer experience while visiting the Yatra website, in which case the website had to be running without any downtime at all.

SOLUTION

To enable the availability of these panoply of services and that too on a 24/7 basis (on an average, Yatra makes 60-70 transactions at night time) called for a reliable, robust and secure platform. The top management did not want to experiment much and needed a low cost, high throughput, secure and reliable platform.

Says Amin, "We did not want to waste time learning new things. The IT team in place was already conversant with the force-multiplier options of Open Source and the advantages for developing Yatra's applications and so the tilt towards Red Hat became that much easier. Besides, we had constraints of time and had to get the site and call center up and running after we announced the launch date of the portal in January this year. The key was to drive organizational change right from the beginning while delivering what we promised to customers at all times. One of the critical aspects that we were firm about was having our own application development team in place rather than buy from a third party and then customize as per requirements. And hence we chose to select Red Hat, as the

operating system of choice for the reliability, scalability and peace of mind it gives in running mission critical applications."

At Yatra, Red Hat Enterprise Linux runs on HP Blade servers. The applications include MySQL database, Open Office and travel applications.

BENEFITS

Being a start-up and a firm proponent of open source technology, it has been quite easy for Yatra to avail of benefits at a very early stage of business growth of the company.

Concurs Amin, "Red Hat has taken us on the road to success and has been instrumental in our posting of heady growth figures in such a short span of time. The OS is now the least of our worries. The query handling facility can be handled seamlessly due to the robustness of the technology. The platform is scalable and robust enough to handle future requirements including traffic uptake, number of transactions and other roll out of services. Overall, the support has been great from Red Hat."

It has also become easy for Yatra to make the site more comprehensive in terms of information, add city guides, allied information and thereby make purchase decisions easier for customers. Yatra is able to customize packages down to the last detail and has thereby broadened the base of customers to include SMEs and other businesses. Its tie-up with Reliance Web World will open up a new channel for customer 'touch points'. Yatra customers already benefit from the first priority booking and customized travel packages and deals for multiple large to small hotels, airlines, railways, buses and car rentals at the lowest prices, as a result of strategic relationships with the leading travel suppliers.

Currently, 40,000 unique visitors log onto Yatra daily. 2500 tickets are sold a day. Amin added that after opting for Red Hat, one of the biggest advantages that Yatra has gained is adaptability to change. This, he avers, is important for a start-up and has made it possible to develop products and services faster in order to address the needs of a burgeoning market place.

FUTURE PLANS

Yatra has ambitious plans to sell more than 5000 tickets a day in the near future, and for that system downtime is unthinkable. Plans are on the anvil to add new servers to account for the additional load in traffic and more importantly transactions. Customer experiences will be made richer and interactive with the setting up of blogs, queries links, 'images corner' etc.

RED HAT SALES AND GENERAL INQUIRIES

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