

Enterprise Solutions Case Study



Reaching new heights with expanded online booking and ticketing

America West Airlines (NYSE: AWA) is a major US carrier serving more non-stop destinations from Phoenix with greater frequency than any other airline. The carrier initiated service in 1983 with just three aircraft. Today, America West is uniquely positioned as the only major airline to offer both low fares for business travel as well as full service options such as assigned seating. With over 800 daily departures, its route system includes 92 destinations across the US, Mexico, and Canada.



Quick View

Booking flights and purchasing tickets through the America West Website has never been easier or more convenient, thanks to developer solutions from Attachmate. Using Attachmate e-Vantage SDK for Airlines, America West created a scalable, flexible, and cost-effective consumer site.

HOST TYPE:

IBM® Mainframes

PRODUCTS USED:

Attachmate e-Vantage® SDK for Airlines

SERVICES USED:

Attachmate Consulting Services

Attachmate Technical Support

Strong distribution channels include Website

At America West, the pace is fast and they are quick to embrace new technology to improve customer service, reduce costs, and stay ahead of the competition. The carrier depends heavily on a number of valued distribution channels for booking travel and selling tickets – travel agencies, in-house reservations, and online through www.americawest.com, first introduced in 1996.

The Website gives America West closer customer contact and enables them to serve travelers directly. “We believe the Web is one of the most important distribution channels we have,” said Tom Trenga, Senior Director of Pricing. “With the high cost of processing tickets, the Website is very cost-effective for us, and provides our customers with a valuable service. More people are choosing the Web, so we can cut costs by moving some of the booking activities to a self-service application via the Internet.”

As customer demand for on-line services increased, America West realized that their web site needed more functionality – specifically, enhanced fare search capabilities – a feature that is important in the highly competitive airline industry. A more robust Website provides more host sessions and scalability going forward. The airline also wanted to time the release of the updated site with its industry leading, low-priced business fares pricing structure, so a speedy solution was needed.

Saving costs by programming in-house

The airline took advantage of in-house programming expertise, and used Attachmate’s e-Vantage SDK (software development kit) to update their Website to take advantage of Microsoft® Windows NT® COM. COM (Component Object Models) allows multiple users to book flights at the same time. Ben Scandlen, America West’s Manager of Programmers, headed the team of nine developers who worked on the Web project, along with four support staff.

“Attachmate was chosen for its ease of transition to the new product. We received a tremendous amount of support to make it work. Attachmate was there with us through the process.”

Tom Trenga, Senior Director of Pricing, America West Airlines

Attachmate Corporation
P.O. Box 90026
Bellevue, WA 98009 USA

(800) 426-6283
(425) 644-4010

Technical Support:
(800) 688-3270

www.attachmate.com

Argentina
(54) 11 4811 4000

Australia
(61) 3 9825 2300

Austria
(43) 1 595 43 350

Belgium
(32) 2 481 07 50

Brazil
(55) 11 3846 3766

Denmark
(45) 47 17 10 00

France
(33) 1 4604 1010

Germany
(49) 89 99 351 0

Hong Kong
(852) 2 572 8988

Italy
(39) 02 671 3101

Japan
(81) 3 5560 8970

Mexico
(52) 5 208 0360

Netherlands
(31) 10 266 77 00

Portugal
(351) 21 340 4671

Singapore
(65) 6223 0233

South Africa
(27) 11 700 4250

Spain
(34) 91 716 09 60

Sweden
(46) 8 630 1700

Switzerland
(41) 1 396 3270

United Kingdom
(44) 118 912 4000

The Airline SDK enables the development of custom, server-based Web-to-host applications. It consists of Java™ and Microsoft COM APIs, allowing programmers to easily add host access capabilities to server-based custom applications. These APIs let applications interact directly with host systems.

During a three-day training session, Attachmate consultants instructed the airline's developers and provided development support. "We realize that it would have been three times more expensive to have someone from the outside come in and do our Web project," explained Tregna. Added Scandlen, "We didn't want to lose control of the process, so we did the work in-house. This also allows us to change the application much more quickly."

Site adds more features and functionality

The old site ran on Wintel servers that gathered pricing and schedule information and created bookings on a TPF host. The new site uses an XML feed for pricing and schedule information based on new, low-fare search technology from ITA Software, but still creates passenger booking records in the TPF host.

"With the old configuration, we had to manage the process of connecting to the TPF host," explained Scandlen. "The savings are not so much in hardware costs, but in reliability and scalability of the new application. We feel confident we can scale the application for future needs."

Fast turnaround puts America West ahead

From concept to completion, the Web project took about nine months. "We are very proud of the fact that we got this project done quickly," said Tregna. "Other airlines took two years to finish similar projects."



Travelers can search for flights, fares, destinations, and frequent flier miles, before purchasing tickets online via the America West Website.

The host connectivity piece turned out to be the most technically challenging part of the project. "We received a tremendous amount of support to make it work. Attachmate was there with us through the process," noted Tregna. Scandlen agreed. "For example, the new application was tested on the development site, but surprisingly, when it went live on a faster server, it worked less efficiently. We utilized Attachmate know-how to help solve this issue."

Customer satisfaction soars

"We made a beta version, of the new application available for customers to use, so we could get their feedback," said Tregna. "When we took the beta site away to do version updates, customers would call in looking for it – in fact, it was the number one 'searched-for' item on our Website and was driving more than 50% of the total sales volume."

Transactions are in real time, with no delays in updating the back-end information on the EDS Shares host. "From an application standpoint, the new Website had performance increases across the board," said Tregna. "This is great, because our customers also go online to get flight status and redeem their frequent flier miles." He added, "Our customers were clamoring for the low fare search capability, and with the launch of the new application, they get what they need," said Tregna.

In addition to flight arrival and departure information, customers can print a receipt allowing them to get through security without having to stop at a ticket counter. "America West was the first to offer this service and other airlines have followed suit," noted Tregna.

According to Scandlen, "Each transaction used to take from 40 seconds to a minute, but now that's been cut in half to about 20 or 30 seconds. We now have the capability to handle 300 concurrent sessions – and the application is scalable to add more, this is significantly better," Tregna said, "America West has a better product for our customers and has lowered the cost of doing business."

Call today for more information

For more information, contact your local Attachmate sales office or call **1-800-426-6283** or **425-644-4010**. Or visit us on the Web at www.attachmate.com.

attachmate™
Attachmate Corporation
P.O. Box 90026
Bellevue, WA 98009 USA

© 2003 Attachmate Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Printed in the USA. Attachmate is a registered trademark and the Attachmate logo is a trademark of Attachmate Corporation. INFOConnect is a registered trademark of Unisys Corporation. IBM is a registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation. Java is a trademark or registered trademark of Sun Microsystems, Inc. in the United States and other countries. Microsoft and Windows NT are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. All other trademarks or registered trademarks are property of their respective owners. 01-xxx.0902

02-0140.0703