Mercury Travels Reduces Transaction Costs by 70%, Serves Twice the Number of Customers

MERCURY TRAVELS

Mercury Travels
Mumbai, India
www.mercurytravels.co.in

Industry:
Travel & Transportation

Employees:
350

Oracle Products & Services:

Oracle CRM On Demand

Oracle Partner
CRM IT
www.crmit.com

"Oracle CRM On Demand allows us to capture every detail about each customer and use that information over and over again." – Anil Nadkarni, CTO, Mercury Travels

Travel and tourism organization Mercury Travels Limited was established in 1948 as a subsidiary of East India Hotels Ltd (EIH), which owns the Oberoi Hotels & Resorts group. Today, Mercury Travels is a joint venture between EIH Ltd and leading travel industry professional Mr Ashwini Kakkar, who acquired a 74.9% stake in the company in August 2006. The company employs more than 350 staff, has 21 offices in 16 cities in India, and marketing offices in Frankfurt, Hamburg, London, New York and Buenos Aires.

Traditionally a provider of corporate travel and inbound travel services, Mercury Travels has expanded its business since 2007 to become a one-stop travel shop. The company now has a comprehensive portfolio of travel-related services that includes outbound and inbound holidays, corporate travel management, foreign exchange, and travel insurance.

Mercury Travels needed a customer relationship management system to help staff manage customers who were dealing with its outbound travel business to book international holidays.

In mid-2008, the company engaged Oracle Certified Partner CRM IT (India) to deploy Oracle CRM On Demand. The Web-based solution allows staff to build profiles on individual customers to speed up consultation times, cut operating costs, and improve customer service levels.

Transaction Costs Reduced, More Customers Served

Mercury Travels uses Oracle CRM On Demand to gain a complete view of customer behavior. The Web-based system allows customer service staff at branches to create a profile of each individual customer that can be used the next time they use the agency to book an overseas holiday. Staff can view the quoted hotel room rates on the fly and gain access to customer information wherever they are located.

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Key Benefits:

- Enabled the company to reduce transaction costs by 70%
- Allowed staff to handle twice the number of customers; including around 10,000 customers during peak period
- Enabled customer service to print invoices automatically and issue vouchers that customers could use while abroad
- Reduced IT infrastructure and management costs by 60% to 70% by using a hosted service
- Gained the ability to create targeted marketing campaigns for the company's travel services

"Oracle CRM On Demand allows us to capture every detail about each customer and use that information over and over again," said Anil Nadkarni, CTO at Mercury Travels. "For example, the system might tell us that a customer did not go to Singapore due to budget constraints, but was keen to go bungy jumping and skiing in New Zealand."

With this information at their fingertips, Mercury Travels staff can serve customers faster and make more informed decisions about customers' holiday preferences. "Importantly, the average cost of each transaction has also been reduced by up to 70% because our consultants are not spending time making calls and doing unnecessary research," said Nadkarni.

In addition, Oracle CRM On Demand has been integrated with the company's existing Aspect call center application, which is used at a small call center staffed by four people. "Calls are first routed from our data center to retail shops and if a consultant is free, they will answer the call," said Nadkarni.

"If they're attending to other calls, the call gets answered by one of our call center staff, who also has access to the customer's information so they don't need to prompt them for basic information or travel history.

"Because all staff have access to a customer's complete history, customer service staff can handle twice the number of customers during the day," he said.

During the peak Indian holiday season between April and June, Mercury Travels will do business with between 5,000 and 10,000 customers across the country. "Without Oracle CRM On Demand, this would not be possible," said Nadkarni.

Invoices and Travel Vouchers Generated Automatically

Customer service staff can print customer invoices automatically using Oracle CRM On Demand. Once the customer confirms their itinerary, an invoice is printed and the customer is provided with vouchers that they can use it overseas for hotel accommodation, food and travel-related activities, rather than using cash or credit cards.

"The customer may use the voucher abroad and the transaction is confirmed in multiple currencies," said Nadkarni. "We would not be able to do that without the Oracle system; we know exactly how much needs to be paid to each supplier."

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Infrastructure Costs Reduced with Hosted Environment

Oracle CRM On Demand is delivered under a hosted environment, which means that Mercury Travels' customer data is stored and managed in an Oracle data center. The company has saved millions of dollars in IT infrastructure and maintenance costs by going down the hosted route.

"There are real benefits in having the data hosted by Oracle," said Nadkarni. "It was 60% to 70% less expensive to use a hosted service than if we had to purchase the additional hardware and hire someone to manage the CRM system."

Mercury Travels may create its own database once the system reaches critical mass of more than 100GB. "If we want to do this, Oracle will simply give our data back," Nadkarni said.

Targeted Marketing Campaigns

Mercury Travels is in the process of acquiring new customers for its outbound travel business and will soon use customer data to create targeted marketing campaigns for its travel services. "We will soon be able to target groups of customers who we know are interested in certain travel destinations and activities based on the data we have collected using Oracle CRM On Demand," said Nadkarni.

Mercury Travels will also integrate Oracle CRM On Demand with its foreign exchange software during the second phase of the project in October 2009.

"We deal with millions of customers in our foreign exchange business, so it makes sense to make use of customer data in that division too," said Nadkarni.

Why Oracle?

Mercury Travels considered a range of CRM products before selecting Oracle CRM On Demand. The company also uses Oracle Financials and Oracle Database.

"Oracle CRM On Demand is the number one CRM product in the world," said Nadkarni. "We looked at other suppliers but felt that their staff lacked the knowledge of travel and holiday industry that was required for the project.

"CRM IT is an Oracle On Demand specialist and the staff had the experience that we needed to ensure the project was successful," said Nadkarni.

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Implementation Process

In September 2008, Oracle Certified Partner CRM IT was engaged to design the workflow and configure the CRM solution.

"CRM IT's role was to understand our business and customer priorities and deploy the solution," said Nadkarni. "We held workshops with CRM IT engineers and explained our business processes before agreeing on a specification document."

A test environment was also created that allowed Mercury Travels to complete a 'gap' analysis. One staff member from each of the company's top 10 locations tested the software.

"We created fictitious customers and services to test how it worked and fill any holes," said Nadkarni. "Once we were happy with the solution, a product manual was created and customer service staff were given their log-in details."

The solution went live on January 1, 2009.

Established in 1948, Mercury Travels provides corporate travel, inbound and outbound travel, foreign exchange and travel insurance services to customers throughout India. The company employs over 350 staff and has 21 offices in 16 cities and marketing offices in Frankfurt, Hamburg, London, New York, and Buenos Aires.

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