



CASE STUDY

Clouds Aren't Just for Airlines

Industry-leading Travel Management Company elevates security, improves customer service and reduces expenses with virtualized, cloud-based technology solution.



Background

The Travel Team, Inc. provides a wide range of business and leisure travel services for global clients. Established in 1989 by the Robert E. Rich family, The Travel Team is a wholly owned-subsidiary of Rich Products Corporation, and a representative office and Centurion member of American Express.

The Travel Team's best-in-class travel technology and innovative high-touch customer service programs enable clients to attain decision-making opportunities that positively impact their profitability, while controlling costs.

The Travel Team employs 100 travel professionals working in offices across New York State—Buffalo (headquarters), Albany or Jamestown—and in Tampa, Fla. 15 percent of the staff also creates a virtual workforce spread across the country.

Challenges

The Travel Team wanted to push itself to a new level of innovative advancement that would not only provide more options to ensure excellent customer service, but also allow its internal IT staff to step away from the day-to-day maintenance of the technology infrastructure. The vision: a 100 percent virtualized infrastructure.

However, there were a number of hurdles to this technology utopia. The geographically dispersed staff was using different versions and brands of operating systems and software applications. Maintaining the entire infrastructure on site increased workloads for various pieces of hardware, leading to increased capital expenses each year. Also, due to a rising number of high-profile security breaches in the retail market, there was increasing scrutiny on vendors that worked closely with financial institutions like banks and credit card companies.

"Travel is like a supply chain and organizations like ours have to quickly and easily adjust to the often changing and at times volatile industry players across that chain. We must employ technology that gives us access to the resources we need, regardless of where we are or what time of day it is," said, **Joel Cristall, II, Vice President of Strategic Technology.**

At a Glance

Background

- Industry-leading Travel Management Company providing a wide range of business and leisure travel services.
- Headquartered in Buffalo, N.Y. with offices in Albany and Jamestown, N.Y. and Tampa, Fla.
- 15% of the 100-person staff works virtually.
- www.thetravelteam.com

Challenges

- No standardization due to a mixture of brands and versions of operating systems and software applications across the company.
- High cost of capital expenses to frequently replace on-site hardware due to heavy workloads.
- Increased scrutiny of vendors that worked with financial institutions to ensure compliance due to high-profile data breaches.

Solution

The Travel Team chose a Cloud Computing for Travel Management solution from Cetrom Information Technology, Inc. This solution virtualized and standardized the company's technology infrastructure nationwide and employed Cetrom's unique hybrid Cloud configuration, which includes an extra layer of redundancy from a local server that replicates to the cloud.

The innate nature of cloud computing provided extensive mobility and accessibility through only an Internet connection. In addition, The Travel Team received the extra bonus of Cetrom's unmatched 99.9 percent uptime guarantee, enterprise-level security and 24x7x365 customer service and support. With its extensive travel industry expertise, Cetrom's certified staff took over all day-to-day administrative technology management and worked closely with industry-specific software vendors to ensure seamless connectivity and optimized functionality of all applications. The new system included programs integral to The Travel Team's operations, such as a global delivery system (GDS), accounting and leisure software, small custom applications, and the full Microsoft Office suite. All of which are standardized for versions and brands across the company.

Cristall commented, *"With Cetrom, we don't have to worry about software licensing, security or system compatibility. They brought in necessary resources ranging from their top technology expert to senior-level engineers to ensure our system was working exactly as it was supposed to be—it was a breath of fresh air."*

In addition to Cetrom's cloud computing services, The Travel Team also adopted a hosted Cisco call system as the final piece of an end-to-end, virtualized environment. The new, cloud-based technology solution enables The Travel Team's internal staff to focus on customer-facing applications and platforms, and increase overall value for clients. They have adopted a more strategic approach to customer service, acting as business analysts and platform-specific specialists to both help customers solve problems and recommend best practices going forward.

Results

Cetrom's Cloud Computing for Travel Management solution has helped The Travel Team ensure mobility, security and reliability of its technology investments. Specifically, due to its own extensive efforts and high levels of certifications, Cetrom helped The Travel Team implement enterprise-security standards, as well as secure FIPS (Federal Information Processing Standards) and SOC (Service Organization Controls/Accounting Standards) certifications.

The company's executives can more easily stay in touch with the business while traveling themselves because hardware is no longer part of the equation to acquire data. Furthermore, with the majority of the workload moved to the cloud, capital expenses have significantly dropped, stretching replacement schedules to every five years instead of every three. This savings is instead reinvested in infrastructure, redundancy and performance through the relationship with Cetrom.

At a Glance

Solution

- 100% virtualized technology infrastructure, including back-end, datacenter, phone, and desktop/server.
- Cetrom's Cloud Computing for Travel Management solution with unique, local Hybrid Cloud option.
- Outsourced all day-to-day technology management so internal staff can focus on more strategic projects and customer satisfaction.

Results

- Enhanced security and compliance to assist in FIPS and SOC certifications.
- Standardization of software applications and operating systems across the company.
- Reduced expenses as hardware replacement is required less frequently.

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Cristall concluded, *"A high level of trust and stability has been established with Cetrom because we have a single point of contact or a small team of the same people working with us, so they know the history of our account as well as our priorities. But more importantly, we know that our systems will always be available without any issues. This is a basic fact, but critical when there is an urgent customer matter to address in a timely manner. Ultimately, virtualizing our technology environment has enabled us to focus more on our business and customers, resulting in increased customer retention and satisfaction."*



Cetrom ranked in top 5% of all Microsoft Partners for Customer Satisfaction

Microsoft Partner
Gold Hosting
Gold Server Platform

Inc.5000 | 500

