



## Evolving a Worldwide Airline's Digital Strategy through Heightened Customer Centricity and Merchandising

### Business Situation

Economic pressures, the changing competitive landscape and the increasingly connected consumer have created a rich environment for airlines to introduce improved and expanded digital experiences to drive revenue, increase customer satisfaction and improve profitability. The unbundling of rate structures and ancillary services has changed the game for airlines, so they increasingly need to act as merchants that sell air travel versus airlines that sell merchandise. With the proliferation of personal mobile devices, the "always connected" customers' expectations are evolving and airlines need to respond with innovative experiences that help customers to manage their travel on-the-go.

### Challenge

A global airline that serves more than 160 million customers per year realized that its digital experiences (Web site, mobile, tablet, kiosk, social media, and in-flight entertainment) could be improved to provide better customer experiences, create new sources of revenue and increase market share. The airline knew its cost to serve customers through company-owned digital channels was lower than using other channels (e.g., online travel agencies, travel agents, or call centers), so it needed to encourage more transactions through

company-owned digital experiences. Additionally, competitors were seeing great gains through the sale of air-related products (e.g., seat upgrades, baggage, etc.) over the Web. This airline needed to not only match the capabilities of the competition, but take the customer experience to the next level by providing customers with more options to purchase an expanded assortment of travel-related merchandise. Lastly, it needed to maximize revenue earned through the traffic hitting airline-owned digital channels by introducing a rich, personalized experience and selling advertising space to partners.

### Solution

We were invited to respond to an RFP to re-platform this airline's digital channel. Out of the gates we were considered the underdog in the mix of respondents. However, our thought leadership around the industry's adoption of a customer-centric model resonated with the airline's leaders. We also proposed an innovative staffing model that engaged expert consultants with a mix of retail and airline expertise. The combination produced a winning strategy that led to the airline's decision to engage us for a twelve-week project to conduct a competitive analysis, develop a customized airline digital channel capability framework, build a roadmap, and develop a business case.

## Benefits

The digital channel capabilities framework, roadmap and business case were all foundational elements used throughout the follow-on phases of the airline's program. The capabilities framework and business case became the mechanism to distribute accountability for the success of the program to the appropriate product manager. The roadmap became the foundation against which the IT team developed its detailed project plans. The airline was so pleased with the result of the initial consulting engagement that it hired us to continue to consult through all phases of the project.

---

## About Cognizant

Cognizant (NASDAQ: CTSH) is a leading provider of information technology, consulting, and business process outsourcing services, dedicated to helping the world's leading companies build stronger businesses. Headquartered in Teaneck, New Jersey (U.S.), Cognizant combines a passion for client satisfaction, technology innovation, deep industry and business process expertise, and a global, collaborative workforce that embodies the future of work. With over 50 delivery centers worldwide and 130,000 employees as of September 30, 2011, Cognizant is a member of the NASDAQ-100, the S&P 500, the Forbes Global 2000, and the Fortune 500 and is ranked among the top performing and fastest growing companies in the world.

Visit us online at [www.cognizant.com](http://www.cognizant.com) for more information.



### World Headquarters

500 Frank W. Burr Blvd.  
Teaneck, NJ 07666 USA  
Phone: +1 201 801 0233  
Fax: +1 201 801 0243  
Toll Free: +1 888 937 3277  
Email: [inquiry@cognizant.com](mailto:inquiry@cognizant.com)

### European Headquarters

1 Kingdom Street  
Paddington Central  
London W2 6BD  
Phone: +44 207 297 7600  
Fax: +44 207 121 0102  
Email: [infouk@cognizant.com](mailto:infouk@cognizant.com)

### India Operations Headquarters

#5/535, Old Mahabalipuram Road  
Okkiyam Pettai, Thoraiakkam  
Chennai, 600 096 India  
Phone: +91 (0) 44 4209 6000  
Fax: +91 (0) 44 4209 6060  
Email: [inquiryindia@cognizant.com](mailto:inquiryindia@cognizant.com)