

Managed IT Services ensure smooth sailing for Norwegian's vital reservation system

When you're the world leader in Freestyle Cruising and offer more than 250 itineraries and accommodations to suit everyone's taste and budget, you've got to run a tight ship. For Norwegian Cruise Line, the innovator in cruise travel, this means ensuring the resiliency of its systems and technology and providing exceptional service to guests from the time they make their reservations to when they board the ship and throughout the cruise.

Client Profile

Norwegian Cruise Line Chief Information Officer Vincent Cirel understands the critical role that resilient information and data systems play in securing just that. This explains why he believes you should never allow a single point of failure in any critical system. Hurricanes, natural disasters, or even a simple power failure can damage customers' experiences and spark a loss of reputation (as well as future revenue). Disaster resiliency helps protect the business and its personnel. Norwegian sought to ensure that disasters – from natural to technical problems, security issues, and other operational snafus – wouldn't disrupt its complex environment: the core reservation system for its fleet of cruise ships.

As Norwegian's reservation system became more complex due to growth and expanding demands on the system, company officials began looking for a provider they could trust with the expertise needed to run their mission-critical operations. That assignment included managing the NCL.com website, where:

- Prospective guests survey cruises and trips, purchase their vacations, and when booked, reserve shore excursions
- Travel agents, including Expedia, Travelocity, and the other independent agencies, are served
- Cruise ship officials manage some guest systems onboard a cruise, including online check-in, on-ship travel changes, and the guest manifest

CLIENT PROFILE

- Headquarters: Miami
- Leisure, Sports & Recreation industry – operates cruise ships
- Employees: 20,000 globally | \$2.28 billion annual revenue (FY2012)

CHALLENGES

- Deeper DR solution to protect personnel and guests
- Flexible scalability

SOLUTION

- 11:11 Managed Services

BENEFITS

- Disaster-resilient managed IT infrastructure
- Management of the mission critical NCL.com website
- Flexibility to scale up or down depending on seasonality of business

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE CASE STUDY

Partnering for business results

Norwegian partnered with 11:11, formerly Sungard AS, to operate, monitor, and protect its systems in order to ensure high performance and responsiveness.

[11:11] provides:

- The highly available and scalable infrastructure Norwegian Cruise Line requires for 24x7x365 operations
- Best-of-breed managed IT services — delivering cost-effective systems management, security, and monitoring capabilities for all applications

Such support can spell a shift in thinking: “With all the technology advances of the last ten years, the ‘R’ in ‘DR’ really stands for disaster resiliency, not recovery,” says Cirel.

Simply imagine: If someone seeking to book a cruise through NCL.com can’t access the website, that person may choose another cruise line — and that loss would represent lost revenue for Norwegian. Multiply this by thousands of inquiries a day, and a storm of an entirely different type is created.

The same holds true for Norwegian’s partners: travel agents and services from Travelocity to Expedia. If they can’t reach Norwegian, they may begin looking to other cruise lines. Norwegian Cruise Line rests easier with [11:11]:

“[11:11] has shown to be a flexible, responsive, and agile partner that understands on a very detailed level exactly what we need — they understand our business,” says Norwegian Cruise Line Vice President of IT Infrastructure and Operations Jeff McVay. “[11:11] stood up and said, ‘We can handle that.’”



“[11:11 Systems] is responsive in a very flexible way, and it’s a big benefit to us. It makes them a better business partner and frees us up to innovate in other ways.”

Jeff McVay

Vice President of IT Infrastructure and Operations
Norwegian Cruise Line

NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE CASE STUDY

Strategic approach

The key differentiator with [11:11] is flexibility, as well as its rapid response to ever-changing Norwegian requirements.

For example, in the fall of 2012, Norwegian confronted the “wave” season – the high booking period of November through March. [11:11] helped Norwegian build in extra resilience to handle the busy reservation time, even providing “boost-able” internet services to address Norwegian’s seasonal needs.

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Cirel cites [11:11]’s quick response recently when Norwegian decided to make a change immediately and over the weekend in its infrastructure resource requirements. [11:11] had little time to coordinate and schedule its resources to meet the assignment’s demands but rose to the challenge and helped Norwegian make the change efficiently and effectively with no impact to critical customer-facing systems.

The [11:11] service approach is built around Norwegian’s requirements, so service levels align with Norwegian business objectives. With more than a year of managing Norwegian systems, the [11:11] team has developed a deep understanding of their systems and enterprise application architecture. As a result, [11:11] is a partner, not simply a supplier.

“They understand when we’re running promotions and how busy and important that time of year is for us,” says Cirel. “They know the critical things to do, like making changes with our website and ensuring the necessary infrastructure is available. It’s been a great transformation and a nice progression.”

McVay says [11:11]’s contribution can be easily measured because its practices represent real value. The time needed to resolve issues and the number of issues “are showing a very positive trend,” he explains.

“I’m proud of the high availability and robust architecture we’ve built with [11:11]’s help. I would put us up against anyone else in the business world.”

Jeff McVay

Vice President of IT Infrastructure
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Norwegian Cruise Line



Case in point

For instance, Norwegian may experience 20-25 smaller IT issues a month that don’t involve customers and, with [11:11] as its IT partner, pre-warning systems mitigate 95-98 percent of the issues with no customer impact.

He adds that [11:11] possesses skilled personnel and a robust infrastructure, as well as the generators, UPS systems, and separate connected power grids to ensure infrastructure availability.

“I’m proud of the high availability and robust architecture we’ve built with [11:11]’s help,” McVay adds. “I would put us up against anyone else in the business world.”



Conclusion

Norwegian Cruise Line continues to look to [11:11 Systems] as a solution-driven partner. It has moved its new phone system to [11:11] to host and expects to have [11:11] take on a more active role in hosting and managing other applications such as a hybrid Cloud application through [11:11] enterprise cloud services. Norwegian officials make it clear that with [11:11] at the helm of their most critical IT operations, they can focus their own resources on managing the changing tides of the cruise business.

RETHINK CONNECTED



CLOUD



CONNECTIVITY



SECURITY

11:11
SYSTEMS