

Client



Company:

Princess Cruises

Website:

www.princess.com

Headquarters:

Miami, Florida, USA

Industry:

Travel

Size:

Over 12,000 employees

Solution:

Alterian Messenger

Results:

Increased passenger outreach capabilities – e-mail campaigns up 210%. Enhanced passenger data management-information uploads completed in about three minutes instead of an hour or more. Reduced employee time spent on managing campaigns by 50%.

"We are now in a position to fully leverage e-mail as a long-term marketing channel. We can personalize the message and control the frequency without running the risk of frustrating our existing and potential customers. With Alterian Messenger, we can support all of our ships and have room to grow."

Stanley McClurkin-Birge
Manager of Marketing Programs

Cruise Line Casts a Customized Net with New Email Relationship Management Solution

Within 48 hours of implementation, Princess Cruises could communicate with more people, while reducing costs and improving speed and efficiency.

Part of Carnival Cruises, which is based in Miami, Florida, Princess Cruises carries more than 1.1 million passengers each year to more worldwide destinations than any other major line. With 12 ships currently in service and four scheduled to join its fleet in 2006, Princess Cruises employs 12,000 people.

Princess Cruises must navigate the ebb and flow of tourism dollars, setting itself apart to fill its ships in the best of times and the worst. Communicating with the 1.1 million-plus passengers who travel with the cruise line each year and attracting new customers requires a comprehensive outreach effort. Customized and targeted content must be delivered in a cost effective, efficient, and timely manner. To accomplish this, Princess Cruises chose an email relationship management solution, built on the Microsoft .NET Framework, and supported by SQL Server 2000 Enterprise Edition and Internet Information Services version 5.0. Within 48 hours of implementation, Princess Cruises could communicate with more people, while reducing costs and improving speed and efficiency.

The Challenge

Princess Cruises grew from a modest one-ship company cruising to Mexico in 1965 to one of the world's premiere lines.

Catapulted to stardom in 1977 when it became the seagoing star of "The Love Boat," Princess Cruises today carries passengers to more worldwide cruise destinations than any other major line. The company offers more than 150 itineraries ranging from seven to 72 days. It sails to all seven continents and calls at nearly 260 ports around the world.

Yet despite its size and reputation, Princess Cruises must still navigate the ebb and flow of tourism dollars, setting itself apart to fill its ships in the best of times and the worst.

According to Stanley McClurkin-Birge, Manager of Marketing Programs for Princess Cruises, acquiring and maintaining long-term customers requires a creative approach to shaping the passenger experience both onboard and shore side.

For example, Princess Cruises pioneered the concept of putting passengers in control of their own cruise experience with the introduction of its Sun-class ships and Personal Choice Cruising® in the mid-1990s.

Communicating these and the cruise line's many other offerings with customers—existing and potential—requires a comprehensive outreach effort. According to McClurkin-Birge, more and more customers want these communications delivered via email.

With the requests for email interaction increasing, Princess Cruises decided its ongoing success depended in part on leveraging email as a long-term and strategic marketing channel. It needed to deliver customized and targeted content in a cost-effective, efficient, and timely manner. "In the aftermath of September 11, the war with Iraq and the down economy, filling ships became increasingly difficult. We needed to take advantage of faster and more economical communication channels," McClurkin-Birge says.

"Our customers were demanding personal contact through email. The cost savings of automated interaction made the basic ROI compelling, but we were looking for a more powerful solution that was easy to use—a tough combination."

Silos Sink Ships

Key to the email solution's power would be its ability to integrate with Princess Cruises' entire front office, which included customer relationship management (CRM) and sales force automation systems offered by Siebel.

Since these systems contained valuable information on existing and potential passengers, Princess Cruises couldn't have its email solution operating in an isolated silo. Further, the email solution would also be collecting data important to the other front office systems, so integration needed to be automatic and seamless.

Other requirements included the following:

- Email campaigns needed to be developed and sent quickly. Besides ongoing and regularly scheduled seasonal promotions, the marketing group at Princess Cruises must also take the lead in "back filling" or bringing a ship's capacity to as close to maximum as possible before it leaves port.

At times, the marketing group has less than a week to do so. Potential passengers need to be located and communicated with quickly. However, the other email solution in use at the time couldn't keep up the pace.

Because of difficult configuration requirements and limited scalability, it could only support a couple of personalized email campaigns per week. And, the proprietary solution often took an hour or more just to upload potential passenger lists from the appropriate databases.

- Customization and campaign management needed to be more efficient and user-friendly. The previous email solution made customization and campaign management almost impossible. For example, in

Alterian Case Study

Princess Cruises

terms of campaign management, the marketing group couldn't track the number of times a campaign had been sent to potential passengers.

Personalization, automatic hardbounce and soft-bounce, unsubscribe controls, and rich media were also time-consuming and difficult to add to the cruise line's email campaigns.

The Solution

Princess Cruises selected an Email Relationship Management solution, Alterian Messenger— the product selected – represents the first enterprise email relationship management solution built on the Microsoft® .NET Framework, part of the Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform.

"A true email relationship management solution needs to interact across the front office," says Jason McNamara, of Alterian. "The .NET Framework gave us the integration path we needed as well as the flexibility for rapid development and rapid change."

Using Microsoft.NET, we developed Alterian Messenger to provide rich, personalized emails with real-time alerts for customer interactions and detailed reporting functions for evaluating the effectiveness of those interactions.

Further, McNamara says, Visual Studio .NET reduces the amount of time and costs associated with customizing its email relationship management solution. In the past, he says, such customization – integration interfaces, tunes, and extensions – could add several thousand dollars and three to six months to a project.

Within the .NET Framework, customization can occur within a few days or a couple of weeks at a much lower cost. This rapid development, ease of customization, and integration is possible because Visual Studio .NET, Visual C#, and ASP .NET all use the same integrated development environment (IDE), which allows them to share tools and facilitates in the creation of mixed-language solutions.

Up and Running within 48 Hours. According to McNamara, the .NET Framework enables our organization to pass these development benefits onto the customer by making Alterian Messenger easy to use. Within 48 hours of signing the contract, Princess Cruises deployed its new email relationship management solution and sent its first round of email campaigns.

"Alterian Messenger's easy-to-use interface put us far ahead of our expectations for deploying campaigns," McClurkin-Birge says. "We are more than pleased with the results and look forward to expanding the solution beyond our current campaigns to add richer features, a greater number of campaigns, and more sophisticated modeling."

Alterian Messenger offers just the type of scalability and sophisticated features and capabilities Princess Cruises needs to meet the demands of future growth. Currently, Alterian Messenger handles information relating to more than 1.1 million passengers. In independent testing, SQL Server 2000 Enterprise Edition shows it can easily meet the scalability and reliability requirements of the largest Web sites, enterprise online transaction processing (OLTP), and data warehousing systems.

By using Alterian Messenger to manage and store passenger information needed to conduct its email campaigns, Princess Cruises can upload information faster, conduct more narrow and customized queries, which results in greater personalization, and implement more effective frequency control.

The Benefits

With Alterian Messenger, Princess Cruises can deliver customized and targeted content in a cost-effective, efficient, and timely manner.

Within the past six months, email campaigns are up 210%, which means the marketing group charged with "back filling" or bringing a ship's capacity to as close to maximum as possible before it leaves port now has a powerful tool at its disposal.

With sometimes less than a week to fill the empty berths, the marketing group can now develop, personalize, and send these campaigns at a greater rate and invest fewer staff hours. For example, Princess Cruises estimates that employee time spent sending out these campaigns has dropped by 50%.

Uploading lists of potential passengers, which once took an hour or more, takes about three minutes with the new email relationship management solution. Alterian Messenger enables narrow searches within the passenger information database, so email communications can be further personalized and better managed.

For example, passengers no longer receive multiple email offers after they've either declined an offer or accepted and signed up for the trip. The new solution keeps track of email frequency and automatically generates reports detailing all interactions, flagging those passengers who have already been contacted or who have accepted or denied offers.

"We are now in a position to fully leverage email as a long-term marketing channel," McClurkin-Birge says. "We can personalize the message and control its frequency without running the risk of frustrating our existing and potential customers. With Alterian Messenger, we can support all of our ships and have room to grow."

Alterian

Alterian (LSE: ALN) empowers marketers with an integrated marketing software platform combining database, online and operational marketing applications on a shared data infrastructure. The Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform makes it practical and cost effective for marketers to use actionable insight to execute an integrated marketing strategy across online and offline channels.

It is the unique integration of analytics, content and execution through Alterian's industry leading tools, such as the Alterian Messenger email platform, and the award winning Alterian Content Management solutions, which enables marketers to drive a seamless, multi-channel customer experience.

Alterian's analytically-led software is delivered to approximately 1,000 marketing departments, across 26 countries, and an international network of more than 100 business partners, including marketing services providers, agencies and systems integrators. Its partners, such as Accenture, Acxiom, Allant Group, Cap Gemini, Carlson Marketing, Experian, Epsilon, InfoUSA, LogicaCMG, Merkle, Ogilvy One and Euro RSCG Worldwide, deliver Alterian software alongside their own domain and services expertise to help market leaders such as Princess Cruises, General Motors, Zurich, Astra Zeneca, HSBC, Limited Too, AEGON, Avis, Worldwide Wrestling Entertainment, Dell, Amnesty International and Vodafone integrate marketing processes and drive competitive advantage.

For more information about Alterian, products within the Alterian Integrated Marketing Platform or our Partner Network, please visit www.alterian.com

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