

Customer Loyalty Program Company Deploys Web Services Solution

Aeroplan Installs Cisco ACE XML Gateway to Increase Rewards Redemption by 500%.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>AEROPLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Loyalty • Montreal, QC Canada • 1200 employees <p>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase the variety of goods and services redeemable with Aeroplan miles
<p>NETWORK SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployed Web services solution to securely connect to more partners fast
<p>BUSINESS RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded their redemption rewards business 500% • Implemented seven additional real-time services in their first six months following deployment • Aeroplan is connecting to new partners in less than two hours.

Business Challenge

Aeroplan, a wholly owned subsidiary of Air Canada, is Canada’s leading loyalty program with more than six million members and sells Aeroplan miles to more than 100 accumulation partners including airline, credit card, hotel, car rental, telecommunication, retail, services and entertainment enterprises.

Aeroplan is only allowed to recognize the revenue when members redeem their miles for rewards. In addition to traditional air travel rewards, Aeroplan members can use their miles for specialty non-air rewards such as car rentals, hotel stays, consumer electronics and vacation packages offered through Aeroplan redemption partners.

To grow their business, extend their independence from Air Canada, and further build member loyalty to

Aeroplan, Aeroplan CEO Rupert Duchesne announced a series of upgrades to the Aeroplan loyalty program, including offering a much broader variety of goods and services that could be redeemed with Aeroplan miles. To the Aeroplan team, Mr. Duchesne simply stated that Aeroplan must enable members to “do more with miles” and do so very quickly. Aeroplan hired a new eBusiness Architect, Spyros Kattou, to determine how to meet this challenge and to execute the solution.

Kattou’s initial challenge was to find a way to link its existing mainframe-based information systems with new rewards partners’ systems quickly and securely to achieve real-time mileage redemption transactions, while protecting the personal information in this application and all Aeroplan’s systems.

Network Solution

Kattou had both tight deadlines and tight budgets. He identified security, provisioning and operating requirements for the system he would select, and he needed to minimize the impact of this development on the existing systems as well as minimize the implementation and development costs. He also needed to ensure that the infrastructure could be managed by his existing, outsourced, IT support team. Although the system would be managed by this team, Kattou needed to ensure he had visibility into transactions and the ability to identify issues and resolve them in real-time. Kattou and his team needed to be able to collaborate with partners to debug and monitor the connections.

Also, Aeroplan needed a system that could scale easily as its loyalty program expanded to include not only new reward partners but also many of its more than 100 existing accumulation partners who might want to migrate from the current FTP-based, batch-mode system to engage in real-time transactions.

Aeroplan selected the Cisco ACE XML Gateway as the only solution that met all its requirements for robust security, rapid provisioning and organizational and operational scalability. Kattou was confident that Cisco had the architectural flexibility to handle disparate formats and protocols and that Cisco would generate sustained cost savings over homegrown efforts. The cluster of Cisco ACE XML Gateways proxy Aeroplan's services, and the Cisco ACE XML Manager, creates and deploys policies, and monitors events and messages.

The Cisco ACE XML Gateway met all of Aeroplan's requirements and accelerated the time to market for Aeroplan's initial Web services. The Cisco ACE XML Gateway enabled Aeroplan to securely and easily expose their systems to their partners, effectively "SOAPifying" their internal services and exposing services that match the partner and message content. Cisco ACE XML Gateways delivers Aeroplan:

- Flexible, secure XML Web services that can be easily used by Aeroplan's partners, customers and internal applications;
- Any-to-any interoperability and mediation with other XML and Web services formats, standards, transports and data;
- Out-of-the-box integration with Aeroplan's security and messaging (MQSeries) infrastructure enabling seamless, rapid conversion between HTTPS and MQ;
- Intuitive, configurable management of Web services policies and connections for rapid development, testing and deployment enabling Aeroplan to connect new partners more quickly;
- Protection against XML-based attacks and traditional identity attacks; and
- Ease-of-operations by enabling the data center in Winnipeg and Aeroplan in Montreal to collaboratively operate the Cisco ACE XML Gateway and drop-in additional appliances as needed for additional throughput.

Business Results

As a result of deploying Cisco's ACE XML Gateways, Aeroplan has accelerated their pace to expand their redemption rewards business 500% by 2007. In addition, the ease of coordination between development, security and operations teams that Cisco enables combined with the reliable performance of the overall system enabled Aeroplan to implement seven additional real-time services in their first six months following deployment. These unanticipated uses were implemented without any changes to the Cisco ACE XML Gateway, or the back-end services themselves. And now Aeroplan is connecting to new partners in less than two hours.

“We estimate the Cisco Ace XML Gateway saved Aeroplan hundreds of thousands of dollars in development costs alone by enabling us to utilize our existing systems with a single appliance that performs not only the necessary security functionality but also the protocol and format conversions.”

—Spyros Kattou, eBusiness Architect

Aeroplan’s production environment utilizes two Cisco ACE XML Gateways in a cluster to ensure 24-by-7 operation with a dedicated Cisco ACE XML Manager. As capacity demands grow, Aeroplan is simply adding additional Cisco ACE XML Gateways.

One of the main reasons they chose the Cisco solution is for linear scalability. With increased volume, they simply add another appliance to the cluster, deploy the security policy, and get an increase in capacity with very little effort and zero development.

With the Cisco ACE XML Gateway, Aeroplan’s developers are creating new services and policies, the security team is applying security policy to those services, and the operations team is ensuring the availability and performance of the services. This unprecedented ease of coordination between these disparate groups combined with the reliable performance of the Cisco ACE XML Gateway enabled Aeroplan to identify and implement seven additional real-time services ranging from real-time email unsubscribes to migrating web and application servers out of existing data centers knowing that they can connect to the legacy system, in real-time, through the Cisco ACE XML Gateway. For Aeroplan, the Cisco ACE XML Gateway is the foundation of their web services security, integration, and operational infrastructure and is enabling Aeroplan to both implement their SOA (Service Oriented Architecture) and generate a compelling ROI (Return On Investment) on it. Aeroplan, using the Cisco ACE XML Gateway is exploiting their IT systems for competitive advantages in the marketplace.

PRODUCT LIST

Cisco ACE XML Gateway

For More Information

To find out more about the Cisco ACE XML Gateway, go to: <http://www.cisco.com/go/ace>.



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