

CASE STUDY – Server

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES

Southwest Airlines Picks PRIMEPOWER to Set the Reliable IT Foundation for Long-Range Vision



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Southwest Airlines

The airline began service in 1971. During these 31 years, Southwest has grown to become the fourth largest airline in America (in terms of domestic Customers carried). The company has got more than 355 of the newest jets in the nation, with an average age of 8.75 years. Southwest Airlines carries nearly 64 million passengers a year with 2,700 flights a day to 59 airports in 30 states. There are more than 34,000 employees throughout the Southwest system.

The Challenge

Southwest Airlines, the largest low-cost carrier in the U.S., knows how to take care of its customers. Year after year, "Rapid Rewards", the company's frequent-flyer loyalty program, has won customer favour and industry awards by being simple and generous. To keep up with the growth of the Rapid Rewards frequent-flyer database, the company needed high quality servers to provide reliability for evolving capabilities. Fujitsu PRIMEPOWER won the company's trusts to host its Rapid Rewards database. The airline's choice was guided as much by the future growth possibilities that the server enables as by the short-term need for more capacity and higher performance.

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The Solution

Rapid Rewards is supported by a pair of high-availability clustered Fujitsu PRIMEPOWER servers. The system layout is optimised for cool, reliable operations. The SPARC64-GP processors are designed specifically for mission critical applications, leveraging Fujitsu's vast experience in mainframe design. Error correction code (ECC) is provided on all primary data paths – the memory, system bus, and both levels of cache. Redundant components, such as power supplies and fans, which are essential to eliminating failure points aren't optional extras with PRIMEPOWER servers – they are part of the base system. And I/O multipathing provides redundant paths for I/O and network access. Southwest Airlines goes the extra mile for high availability by clustering two PRIMEPOWER servers – a 600 and a 400 model – using PRIMECLUSTER software which employs redundancy sophisticated cluster deployment tools, and intelligent application and resource management facilities.

The Benefits

Southwest Airlines trusts its Rapid Rewards program to Fujitsu PRIMEPOWER servers for a fundamental reason – reliability. "We need the most reliable system possible to run our Rapid Rewards customer database," said Kerry Schwab, Manager of Southwest's Operations for Market Automation. In addition to superior reliability, the airline chose PRIMEPOWER for performance. "The PRIMEPOWER 600 was faster than the alternative top of the line systems," Schwab added. "Since upgrading to the PRIMEPOWER 600, we've seen a substantial performance boost, faster response times, and our backups are quicker." And that was accomplished without increasing the number of processors. With Fujitsu PRIMEPOWER servers, Rapid Rewards has consistently been one of the best frequent-flyer programs in the industry which has won 7 awards from Inside Flyer magazine, the leading publication in the world for members of frequent traveller programs.

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