

“To help our airline customers succeed in a very competitive industry, we need a way to migrate data more efficiently. Talend is the solution for data mobility.”

Dave Gebhart, Software Development Principal, Sabre Airline Solutions



INDUSTRY

- Travel/ Technology

INFORMATION

- HQ: USA
- 5,001 - 10,000 employees

USE CASE

- Database migration

CHALLENGE

- Reducing upgrade time and costs for customers

TALEND PRODUCTS USED

- Talend Open Studio
- Talend Data Integration

RESULTS

- **80% reduction** in data migration costs
- **2x increase** in number of upgrades per year
- Reduced time frame for upgrades **from weeks to hours**

Giving airline data a critical upgrade

Sabre Airline Solutions (Sabre) offers a broad range of software and data solutions to help airlines market themselves, sell products, serve customers and operate more efficiently. It provides airline reservations systems, along with a full suite of marketing and commercial planning software and enterprise operations solutions. Sabre serves approximately 225 airline customers, primarily through Software as a Service (SaaS) and hosted models, providing lower cost of ownership, flexibility and scalability as airlines grow. Sabre Airline Solutions also serves approximately 700 other customers including airports, cargo and charter airlines, corporate fleets, governments and tourism boards.

Reducing upgrade time and costs for customers

Sabre competes with other software vendors to supply applications to airlines that enable them to manage a variety of planning tasks and strategic operations, including crew schedules, flight paths, and weight and balance for aircraft. Supplying an entire integrated suite of applications is one of Sabre's competitive advantages, because data does not have to be stitched together and formatted for use by disparate applications.

The challenge for Sabre was that many airlines had not implemented the proper upgrades, which meant the application suite they were using was several versions old. Upgrading to the latest version to take advantage of new features and functionality would require them to upgrade the Oracle database that stores the essential data used by the applications. However, the airlines couldn't simply jump to the latest version—they would have to implement each upgrade

to the database. “Once we delivered a version of our software, many airlines would use only that version for a long time and decline our suggestions to upgrade,” says Dave Gebhart, Software Development Principal, Sabre Airline Solutions. “That meant we had some large customers who were as many as five versions behind. Moving them to the new suite would be a time-consuming, expensive, version-by-version process.”

Customers, understandably, were nervous about tackling that process, so Gebhart and his team began investigating solutions for making multiple yearly upgrades possible, which would be a faster and more cost-efficient way for customers to begin using a new version of the Sabre solutions suite.

Why Talend?

“We started evaluating solutions to accomplish the data migration, and I had a list of four or five to test,” says Gebhart. “Talend was one of the first ones, and it was immediately obvious that Talend had such a complete and rich feature set, and it was such a joy to work with. Because it's based on the Eclipse framework, it feels very familiar and intuitive to a developer like me. And when I occasionally had a question, I'd get quick answers from the open-source community supporting Talend.”

Gebhart and his team successfully completed a proof of concept with Talend, after which he was given a deadline of two weeks to complete the migration for an important customer.

“Talend surpassed our expectations—it’s the Swiss army knife of data transformation. We’re really big fans!”

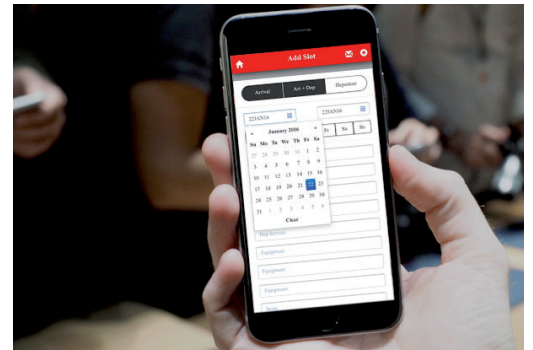
“There are other teams at Sabre already using the Enterprise version of Talend. My team has a couple of compelling reasons to upgrade too”, says Gebhart. “One is that we have a distributed development team, and the version control it would provide would help all team members coordinate their work. Also, the Enterprise version has a more robust feature set that includes some capabilities—such as parallelization,—that would be very useful for us.”

Replicating a process to save time and money

Gebhart acknowledges that Sabre’s database migration use case “only scratches the surface of what Talend can do,” but that it perfectly matched the company’s needs. “The end result was that we were able to do the migration in just a matter of hours for the customer, rather than asking them to commit to a laborious, multi-stage upgrade process,” he says. “Once we finished the migration and turned everything on, they were so happy.”



Another benefit of the shorter, more-cost-efficient process is that Sabre can easily replicate it—Gebhart says that since that first successful migration, Sabre has used the process in the same way for a number of customers. Talend-powered migration process delivers clear, measurable benefits, for both Sabre and its customers. “If we used previous methods,” he says, “migrations would take a week, versus the couple hours it now takes. The new process also reduces the cost of doing migrations by 80 percent, and it has enabled us to do as many as 25 upgrades in a year, whereas previously we could manage only 10 or so. That means we more than doubled the upgrade slots we’re able to service because of all the benefits of using Talend.”



Gebhart is currently working on a project that uses Talend for a more-complex task. “We’re integrating three legacy applications, and we’re using Talend to extract data and transform it into objects that can be converted into XML service requests, which are then processed so the data can be loaded via web services into a new system,” he says. “Talend is the engine we’re using to drive this multi-step process.”