

Sun Country – Elevating the Digital Experience



CASE STUDY: NAVITAIRE DIGITAL SERVICES

Sun Country Airlines has earned a reputation for offering world class service at an affordable price. In 2018, Sun Country's new management embarked on a digital transformation program, selecting Navitaire's New Skies® reservations platform to underpin its growth plans and create a strong digital presence. Hindered by dated technology over the years, the carrier knew it needed to quickly move beyond the previous platform's limitations and implement big changes across their sales channels to meet the demands of today's digital travelers.

Sun Country reached out to Navitaire intent on creating a superior digital experience for their guests with a first-class responsive website using the latest in single-page application architecture.

Challenge

With a six-month timeline in mind, Sun Country approached Navitaire with a unique opportunity – to work in tandem to create a new, modern website and portal experience across all their sales channels. The project would require a strategic, focused plan to achieve a successful on-time delivery. Sun Country was determined to deliver key elements simultaneously with the switch to New Skies – its flagship project in 2019:

- **Website** – Design and development of a feature-rich website that provided a best-in-class experience across all devices
- **Travel Commerce** – Connect with partner content to offer non-flight ancillary products in-path, starting with hotels
- **Navitaire Loyalty** – Support Sun Country's rewards program throughout all sales channels
- **Branded credit card** – Incorporate an in-app Sun Country-branded credit card application for immediate use towards purchases
- **CMS** – Integrate with third-party content management system to quickly react to market conditions
- **Travel agency portal** – Build a separate portal for travel agents to create and manage agency bookings
- **Self-service kiosk** – Build a user interface to facilitate passenger processing

"The strength of our partnership with Navitaire was the key intangible to ensuring the success of this project. Navitaire's Digital Services Team exceeded our expectations by delivering expert recommendations and a high-quality product and doing so in such a way that set us up for self-sufficiency moving forward."

Kim Popkin

Senior Director IT
Sun Country Airlines



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How Navitaire Helped

To accomplish this, Sun Country leveraged the new Navitaire Digital Experience Suite, a collection of software development kits incorporating an open API, pre-built connectors, UI components, developer documentation, and sample web and mobile apps. The Navitaire Digital Experience Suite builds on New Skies' rich capabilities, applying a user experience approach with modern frameworks and components to create leading digital experiences for airlines and their customers. By delivering greater control over the presentation to customers, the Navitaire Digital Experience Suite represents a comprehensive integrated solution that lets an airline leapfrog the costlier, outmoded limitations of a traditional PSS plus separate IBE solution used by many airlines today.

Over the next six months, Navitaire and Sun Country worked as a 30+ person joint Agile delivery team inclusive of developers, designers, QA, project managers and product owners in a fully transparent Azure DevOps project.

The multi-disciplinary team worked in two-week sprints, continuously delivering app features built on the Navitaire Digital Experience Suite. Each incremental build was transferred to Sun Country's UAT team for testing. Navitaire and Sun Country participated in traditional scrum ceremonies enabling the teams to iterate quickly and react swiftly as Sun Country refined its vision of the new website.

Results

Together, the teams delivered a fully responsive website that supports Sun Country's new business model while delighting users with a clean, sharp, performant experience across all devices.

Both the responsive website and travel agency portal offer key features including smart calendar search, change/cancel, ancillaries, hotel offers, flight status, profile management, Google Analytics incorporation, integrated CMS, and Sun Country branded credit card application all ADA compliant. Sun Country's new kiosk user interface leverages Navitaire's Digital API to communicate with New Skies, making the solution fast and friendly for travelers.

The new digital experience is driving meaningful results. Total visits across all channels, including desktop, mobile and tablets, increased by more than 10%, and conversion basis points improved by 270-700 points. With results like these, Sun Country is on a clear path to establish a strong digital presence able to attract more loyal customers.

+11%

Total visits increased 11% across all devices

+10%

Total visits were up by 10% on desktop

+12%

Total visits were up by 12% on mobile (including tablets)

+7%

My Trips traffic increased by 7%

+274

Conversion basis points increased by 274

+703

Conversion basis points on desktop increased by 703

+283

Conversion basis points on mobile (including tablets) increased by 283