

Travel Leader Accelerates Business Analytics Using SAP HANA on UCS



Executive Summary

- **Customer Name:** TUI Travel Accommodation & Destinations (TUI Travel A&D), part of TUI Travel PLC, one of the world's leading travel companies
- **Industry:** Travel and Leisure
- **Location:** Global, headquartered in Palma de Mallorca (Spain)
- **Number of Employees:** Over 8000 employees across 50 countries
- **Technology/Application Partner:** SAP

Challenge

- Improving performance on key SAP business intelligence applications
- Streamlining data center management and enhancing scalability
- Reducing complexity and costs of technology servers

Solution

- Consolidated servers onto Cisco UCS servers that reliably run SAP HANA and other SAP applications for improved performance
- Improved performance and reporting, enabling TUI to understand and adjust to constantly changing customer demands

TUI Travel Accommodation & Destinations migrates to UCS to tap into computing power of SAP HANA for business analytics.

Business Challenge

As part of TUI Travel PLC, one of the world's leading leisure travel companies, TUI Travel A&D competes in high-growth areas of the leisure travel market, including accommodation wholesale; accommodation OTA (online travel agent); inbound services and cruise handling. TUI Travel A&D is growing quickly and has market-leading brands including the global brands Hotelbeds, Intercruises, Destination Services, Worldcome, and Pacific World and leading local brands including LateRooms.com and AsiaRooms.com.

With an unrivalled local presence of destination services companies in over 50 countries, a database of over 55,000 hotels worldwide, and a global network of port and shore-side services to the world's leading cruise operators, the company operates in diverse sectors of the leisure industry to offer a wide breadth of customer experiences.

In recent years, TUI Travel A&D has become a leader in the fastest growing sector of the leisure industry: online travel services. In this competitive industry, where new companies appear daily, leaders such as TUI Travel A&D must continually optimize their services based on the latest trends and demands to entice customers with the right services at the right time for the right price.

"The travel and leisure industry is extremely seasonal and is constantly changing," says Santiago José Reig Lamberti, Head of Business Intelligence, Business to Business, at TUI Travel A&D. "In order to keep our leading position, we must continually monitor our performance, customer behavior, cancellation trends, and other factors, and that requires having immediate insight into all the data at our disposal."



Executive Summary (continued)

Results

- Significantly improved database performance with daily loads running up to 24 times faster
- Reduced server deployment time from months to minutes
- Lowered IT administration costs by more than 150,000 euros annually through virtualization and physical consolidation

“Now that we’re using SAP HANA on Cisco UCS, we have gone from analyzing millions of records in hours to the flexibility of analyzing hundreds of millions of records in seconds.”

– **Santiago José Reig Lamberti**
Head of Business Intelligence B2B,
TUI Travel Accommodation & Destinations

With rapid, reliable information processing and analysis critical to staying ahead of competitors, TUI Travel A&D found that its existing data centers could not keep up with the company’s tremendous business growth or the accompanying surge in data that needed to be analyzed. The company’s existing servers were difficult and expensive to manage and did not deliver the performance needed to fully support the SAP applications in use at TUI Travel A&D, including SAP Business Warehouse and Business Objects Suite.

“Our goal was to adopt a higher-performance, more reliable solution to accelerate data analysis and effectively manage our continually growing data volumes,” says Olivier Savelbergh, Head of Business Intelligence at TUI Travel A&D.

Solution

After evaluating solutions, TUI Travel A&D chose to accelerate performance of key SAP applications using Cisco Unified Computing System™ (UCS®) data center solutions. But that was just the first step. After learning more about SAP HANA, the real-time, in-memory business intelligence solution from SAP, and meeting with the Cisco® UCS and SAP HANA teams, TUI Travel A&D realized that it could take data analysis to whole new levels and provide hundreds of managers companywide with immediate insight into critical business operations.

With a focus on improving data analytics and network operations overall, the TUI Travel A&D IT team deployed SAP HANA running on Cisco UCS C460 high-performance rack servers. Additional SAP applications, such as SAP BW and SAP Business Objects Suite, were deployed on Cisco UCS B200 M2 servers, Cisco UCS B230 M2 servers, and Cisco UCS B440 M2 servers, along with vital web services to manage millions of hotel booking transactions that the company processes annually. The data center also includes Cisco UCS 5108 Series blade server chassis, Cisco UCS 6248 fabric interconnects, Cisco Nexus® 7000 Series switches to accelerate performance in critical systems through 10 GbE connections, and Cisco UCS Manager to provide unified management for all components.

“We realized that Cisco data center solutions were the right choice for our business,” says Adi Merzbach, Head of IT Infrastructure at TUI Travel A&D. Cisco UCS is fully supported and certified by SAP to support SAP HANA, giving TUI Travel A&D both the power and flexibility of UCS integrated with the superior in-memory data analytics enabled by SAP HANA. The combination of SAP solutions with Cisco UCS delivers proven value by offering a unified, high-performance fabric, optimized memory capacity, reduced energy consumption, and low total cost of ownership.

The project with TUI Travel A&D is the first SAP HANA reference on UCS in production in the EMEAR region and an unequivocal demonstration that Cisco UCS offers an ideal pairing with SAP HANA to increase the yield of data warehouse systems.

Using Cisco UCS to first support SAP HANA, and then as the foundation to virtualize key applications and eventually handle all data center operations, TUI Travel A&D is realizing the improved performance that it desired, in addition to a significantly streamlined infrastructure. By migrating aging servers onto a combination of Cisco UCS blade and rack servers, TUI Travel A&D reduced the physical data center footprint, lowering the costs of hosting. The streamlined infrastructure is also easier and less expensive to maintain and scale. Cisco UCS Manager further enhances scalability and time to market for new services through service profiles that make deployment of new servers fast and easy.

“An added advantage of our move to Cisco UCS is the strong support for virtualization via VMware vSphere Enterprise,” says Merzbach. “Not only can we maximize performance and resource use, but we can also accelerate system consolidation and roll out new services and applications faster.”

Business Results

With SAP HANA running on Cisco data center solutions, TUI Travel A&D is seeing a great improvement in the performance of its business intelligence applications. “Now that we’re using SAP HANA on Cisco UCS, we have gone from analyzing millions of records in hours to the flexibility of analyzing hundreds of millions of records in seconds,” says Lamberti.



The ability to analyze huge volumes of information in real-time has given the company’s executives and business managers unprecedented insights. Previously, information was split into many different records to reduce record size. For analysis of customer acquisition, for example, customer and supply information would be contained in separate records, making simultaneous analysis of both difficult. Because SAP HANA on Cisco UCS helps enable analysis of much larger data volumes, those standalone records can be merged. This capability empowers team members to review information from the customers’ perspectives, then immediately look at it from the supply perspective. With more flexibility to instantly analyze information from many perspectives, TUI Travel A&D managers are gaining new insights to deliver greater returns to the business and enhance online experiences for customers.

Using SAP HANA on Cisco UCS has also enhanced performance of the business intelligence database. With millions of records covering booking, financial, and sales information, simply moving sections of the database were time consuming. Daily loads could take up to six hours, and if the database needed to be reloaded to support a new feature or fix an issue, the reload could take several weeks. Now, the daily loads take only 15 minutes, while a reload can be completed in less than a day. In the time-sensitive travel industry, this performance increase can eliminate information delays that affect the company’s ability to optimize sales by responding to current, dynamic conditions.

Further consolidation of the data center and virtualizing applications on UCS servers will continue to have a big impact on IT maintenance, scalability, and associated costs. With a smaller physical footprint, TUI Travel A&D estimates that the company will save more than 150,000 euros per year in IT housing and administrative costs. In addition, Cisco UCS Manager helps enable the IT team to deploy new virtual servers in minutes versus days or even months. “Previously, it could take two months to get a server into production, not counting any problems that might occur during provisioning,” says Merzbach. “With Cisco UCS, we can deploy a new virtual server in minutes.”

Next Steps

Given TUI Travel A&D’s ongoing rapid growth, the company will deploy Cisco UCS in its data center over the next several years solidifying its position in online travel services. The result will be to further reduce infrastructure and hosting costs through physical consolidation, while improving the virtualized performance and scalability of the data centers.

Product List

Data Center Solutions

- Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS)
 - Cisco UCS C460 High-Performance Rackmount Servers
 - Cisco UCS B200 M2 Blade Servers
 - Cisco UCS B230 M2 Blade Servers
 - Cisco UCS B440 M2 High Performance Blade Servers
 - Cisco UCS 5108 Series Blade Server Chassis

Routing and Switching

- Cisco Nexus 7000 Series Switches

Fabric Interconnects

- Cisco UCS 6248 Fabric Interconnects

Network Management

- Cisco UCS Manager

Applications

- SAP HANA
- SAP Business Warehouse
- SAP Business Objects Suite 4.0

Storage

- EMC

Virtualization

- VMware vSphere Enterprise

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Unified Computing, visit: www.cisco.com/go/ucs.

To find out more about Cisco Unified Data Center, visit: www.cisco.com/go/unifieddatacenter.

To find out more about Cisco Nexus Switches, visit: www.cisco.com/go/nexus.

To see how Cisco integrates with SAP technologies, visit: www.cisco.com/go/sap.



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