

Avis Europe

Avis Europe increases customer focus and market responsiveness with Micro Focus® Verastream®.

Overview

Avis Europe is one of the world's leading car hire firms, with annual revenue of over €1 billion. The car rental market is highly competitive, and the company is intent on maintaining its position at the front of the race.

To maintain a competitive edge, the company used Verastream to build new pricing and on-line service options for customers.

Challenge

In recent years, competition has intensified with the entrance of brokers and intermediaries. Internet reservations have increased dramatically, and there is strong price competition,

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Business Systems Analyst
Avis Europe

as customers can quickly and easily compare the prices of different operators online before booking.

Against this background, Avis Europe is constantly looking for ways to become more customer focused and market responsive. It wanted to improve the range of services available via its website, to make the car rental process easier for customers. It also wanted to be able to change prices faster to respond to market fluctuations and to introduce short-term, regional offers.

To achieve these goals, Avis Europe needed to provide improved access to financial and customer data in a central mainframe system that is owned and operated by its sister company, Avis Inc, in the USA. This mainframe system has served the company well for many years, but its green screens are not user-friendly and necessitated lengthy training.

Solution

After a thorough product search, Avis selected Verastream. “Attachmate (now part of Micro Focus) really stood out,” says Paul Brough, a business systems analyst at Avis Europe. “We were up and running with Verastream in less than a month—and that included all of the initial application development and training.”



AVIS

At a Glance

■ Industry

Transportation/Hospitality

■ Location

United Kingdom

■ Challenge

Competitive pressures required the company to expand its online service offerings and accelerate the implementation of price changes.

■ Solution

Use Verastream to easily access mainframe information and use it to build new pricing and online service options.

■ Results

- + Expanded the range of online services for customers.
- + Improved responsiveness to price changes and short-term regional offers.
- + Gained the ability to implement new business solutions with speed and flexibility.
- + Increased ROI from existing mainframe assets.

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The solution was initially put to use in the financial department to give users faster access to large volumes of data from its general ledger system. But this was just the beginning. “As soon as we had Verastream on board and had discovered how easy it is to use, there was significant interest from many different business areas,” says Brough. Verastream has since been used in two other departments.

The first of these projects took place in the revenue management department. Avis Europe has over 3,700 rental stations, and introducing new rates, terms, and conditions to each location often took several days because the complex mainframe systems were time-consuming to update.

To speed up the process, Avis Europe now uses Verastream to upload new pricing information from a local application to the central mainframe. From there, the pricing information is instantly available to all rental locations. Avis Europe also uses Verastream to verify that the mainframe information on terms and conditions related to pricing offers is correct and consistent across countries.

“We can now change prices across all our locations in less than one quarter of the time,” says Christian Clausen, a technical team leader in the revenue management department of Avis Europe. “This has had a huge impact on the business. We can match competitive prices and reflect changes in demand quickly and effectively.”

The second project relates to the new UK website. Avis Europe wanted to give customers the ability to update their Preferred profiles online. It therefore used Verastream to create

a link between its UK website and the central mainframe system, where global customer information is held. When customers access the website, Verastream retrieves information about Preferred cardholders in real time and then manages subsequent updates back to the mainframe.

“Customers can now view and update their own details themselves, including credit card and billing information,” explains Brough. “This wasn’t possible on our website before we introduced Verastream. Instead, customers had to telephone or visit a rental station to update their details. We can now offer a much better online service for our customers.”

Results

In the future, the company foresees that Verastream will be able to deliver quick-win benefits in other parts of the business too. For example, it plans to use Verastream to help it access information to process parking fines more easily.

Avis Europe has been impressed by how easy it is to create new applications. After just half a day of instruction, members of the IT application teams were able to build a fairly complex set of procedures for accessing information via Verastream. “We can develop interfaces quickly and with a relatively small amount of training,” says Brough.

He concludes: “Verastream gives us access to a huge amount of data that we otherwise couldn’t get to in real time. It enables us to speed up multiple transactions and ultimately increase the value that we gain from our existing mainframe system.”



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