

ENTERPRISE CLOUD SERVICES

## A swift flight to the Cloud

**Since its inception in 1990, Spirit Incentives has evolved as the incentive solution provider of choice for small-to medium-size businesses and Fortune 500 companies alike. Located in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Spirit Incentives has set the travel premium industry standard for innovation, integrity, and customer service.**

In 2007, Spirit Incentives contracted with Sungard Availability Services as a managed hosting customer. Through this service, Sungard AS managed Spirit Incentives' physical servers, firewalls, switches, and various peripherals. However, in 2011, Spirit Incentives realised that a change was needed in the IT environment to keep pace with their escalating growth.

The company was faced with two options: they could upgrade their physical environment or they could migrate to the cloud.

### Deciding to migrate

Multiple factors were considered during the decision-making process. Ivan Parra, Vice President of Information Technology at Spirit Incentives, explained one of the key issues at hand: "Our physical equipment was no longer meeting our needs. On one hand, we had unutilised resources sitting stagnant. On the other hand, we had servers that were completely tapped out. Also, all of our equipment was getting to the point where we would have to refresh it. To continue as we had been doing, we would have had to make costly upgrades and potentially purchase new equipment as well."

To avoid this capital expenditure outlay, Spirit Incentives examined Sungard AS Enterprise Cloud Services. Robert Kramlich, a Sungard AS Senior Account Executive, noted several of the benefits that attracted Spirit Incentives to the cloud: "First, it is a fully-managed solution. Spirit Incentives has limited IT staff, so they needed complete IT support for their systems. Second, because Sungard owns the equipment to operate the cloud, we handle all hardware and software refreshes. Spirit Incentives would have the benefit of completely up-to-date technology at all times, without having to purchase or maintain it."

Spirit Incentives explored the technological capabilities of the cloud further and was convinced that this was the correct solution for them. The Sungard AS Enterprise Cloud provides Spirit Incentives with access to enterprise-grade, multi-tenant V-block architecture. Spirit Incentives can draw upon a resource pool of memory, storage, virtual CPUs, portals, reporting, rapid provisioning, security and firewalls, load balancing, and more: everything is included as part of the fully-managed infrastructure.

## SPIRIT INCENTIVES

### Business challenge

A Sungard AS customer since 2007, Spirit Incentives had been utilising Sungard AS's hosting services, with Sungard AS managing Spirit Incentives physical servers, firewalls, switches, and various peripherals. In 2011, as Spirit Incentives continued to grow, it found that its current physical set-up was no longer adequate for the evolving business. Spirit Incentives was faced with two options: they could purchase new servers and continue to update their physical environment, or they could migrate to the cloud.

### Solution

- Enterprise Cloud Services.

**"Cloud technology gives us two vital capabilities: flexibility and scalability. Regarding flexibility, we can keep our capacity balanced for daily work and seasonal fluctuations. When looking at scalability, we can add on as needed. The cloud positions us to grow effectively at a fast pace."**

**Ivan Parra,**  
Vice President of  
Information Technology,  
Spirit Incentives



#### Business benefits

Moving to the cloud allowed Spirit Incentives to consolidate services, reduce capital expenses, and optimise the use of its staff and its applications.

Responding to an urgent deadline, the Sungard AS Enterprise Cloud Services solution was built around the customer requirements and turned over to the customer within 10 days.

Parra affirmed, “Cloud technology gives us two vital capabilities: flexibility and scalability. Regarding flexibility, we can keep our capacity balanced for daily work and seasonal fluctuations. When looking at scalability, we can add on as needed. The cloud positions us to grow effectively at a fast pace.”

#### Managing the migration

Sungard AS Enterprise Cloud Services were built around Spirit Incentives’ requirements and turned over within 10 days for Spirit to load their applications. Kramlich commented upon one of the challenges experienced during the migration:

“Spirit uses Oracle, and they were concerned about implementing Oracle within the cloud environment. However, subsequent use and testing has demonstrated that Oracle performs faster and better than ever in the cloud.”

But the biggest challenge was simply that of time. Spirit Incentives had a hard deadline of May 31st to complete the migration – with no margin for error or delay. Parra applauded Sungard AS’s involvement throughout this process:

“I was extremely impressed with Sungard’s attention to the urgency of our situation. We had their staff available literally 24 hours a day. We were making calls at 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning and not once did I feel that they were not there with us. We were actually engaged over the Memorial Day

weekend. Sungard was a big portion of the pie when it came to managing the migration: if we had faltered there, it would have been difficult to be successful. They were with us 100%.”

#### Celebrating the migration

Spirit Incentives has experienced a myriad of immediate benefits following their migration to the cloud. They were able to rely upon Sungard AS’s Service Level Agreement, which ensures 99.95% cloud infrastructure availability as well as excellent transmission latency, all ensuring that their data could move swiftly and reliably across the network and around the world. With security and redundancy built into the V-block architecture, Spirit Incentives has found the cloud a safe place in which to store data and manage applications.

Spirit Incentives has already realised significant financial savings, with costs down 35% over their previous IT management expenses.

Parra confirmed Spirit Incentives’ full satisfaction with the cloud solution. “Our performance is better than ever, and Sungard continues to deliver attentive, quality service. We anticipate that our move to the cloud will have a positive impact on how we do business going forward. We’re in a position of growth. We are prepped to expand both our applications and our functionality. The cloud is an intrinsic and necessary part of our future.”

#### About Sungard Availability Services

Sungard Availability Services provides managed IT services, information availability consulting services, business continuity management software, and disaster recovery services. To learn more, visit [www.sungardas.co.uk](http://www.sungardas.co.uk) or call 0800 143 413

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