IBM

United Airlines Silver Wings Plus members fly into cyberspace with IBM

United Airlines Silver Wings Plus® is a paid-membership travel loyalty program for travelers 55 and older. In 1996, Silver Wings Plus' 560,000 U.S. and Canadian members flew over one million miles to earn credits that could be redeemed for substantial savings when flying on United Airlines, renting cars, cruising, and staying at major hotels.

Recognizing the potential of this market segment, United Airlines Silver Wings Plus was looking for a faster and more efficient way to inform members of special, limited-time offers than through mailings of its monthly newsletter. Through a partnership with IBM®, United Airlines Silver Wings Plus has not only achieved real-time communication with its members, but has also made using the Internet a friendly and comfortable experience for a generation that grew up without computers in their classrooms.

Direct mail too slow for marketing time-sensitive offers
The lag between the time a Silver Wings Plus newsletter is printed and mailed, and the time the recipient receives and acts on the informa-tion, makes it virtually impossible for members to take advantage of last-minute offers for airline seats, cabins on cruise lines, and other opportunities. Rik Danielson, vice president of marketing for Silver Wings Plus, says, "Traditional forms of communication and price-driven marketing do not work for time-sensitive offers."

Danielson knew that if Silver Wings Plus could help seniors become comfortable with using the Internet, they could learn about special promotions and limited-time offers at the company's two Web sites. To support the viability of marketing to seniors via the Internet, Silver Wings Plus conducted a survey of its members, which revealed that 50 percent have home offices, 36 percent have PCs at home, and 10 percent intend to purchase a PC within the year.

"With 22 percent of our members saying that they're receptive to using their United Airlines Mileage Plus miles to purchase a PC, we began looking for a partner that could provide value," says Danielson. "We chose IBM Global Services because that name is synonymous with quality and reliability. IBM provides a comfort factor unmatched by any other computer company."

IBM gets seniors to log on
Many seniors are using IBM Aptiva home computers, which some have received by taking advantage of United Airlines travel promotions. To make it easier for members to fly into cyberspace by logging onto the Internet, Silver Wings Plus also offered IBM Internet connection kits with IBM Global Network as the service provider.

Silver Wings Plus members can now create a professional-looking five-page Internet "home

Application	Direct marketing
	Web hosting
Hardware	IBM Aptiva® PCs
Services	IBM Global Services
	IBM Global Network™
	Catapult workshops

Silver Wings Plus members attend Catapult computer and Internet workshops.

page" with a unique universal resource locator (URL) using the IBM HomePage Creator service. They have the opportunity to attend members-only IBM Computer and Internet workshops.

"Seniors want to stay in touch with their families and with the world. The Internet appeals to them because they can send email to grandchildren and keep up with the news," Danielson says.

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—Rik Danielson, Vice President of Marketing, Silver Wings Plus

Teaching computer skills in a nonthreatening environment

For its members taking their first steps into the computing age, United Airlines Silver Wings Plus teamed with Catapult, an IBM subsidiary and a leader in software training, to offer workshops throughout the U.S. that teach computer and Internet basics.

Danielson explains that these exclusive workshops offer highly individualized computer training with no more than 12 students per instructor so that Silver Wings Plus members can learn at their own speed, surrounded by other members

who make them feel comfortable.

"Many seniors prefer to learn in a nonthreatening environment from IBM-trained instructors. They actually fly in to major cities to take Catapult's classes, and make the classes part of an extended vacation," says Danielson.

Partnering brings mutual advantages

Danielson adds, "A unique advantage of having IBM as an Internet partner is the depth and breadth of its products and services on a global basis. The advantage of United Airlines Silver Wings Plus is the ability to position IBM products and services that satisfy our customer requirements. Without IBM's e-business products and services, Silver Wings Plus would not have been able to support its members in expanding beyond travel-related benefits."

United Airlines Silver Wings Plus has added 60,000 members in the last two years. The company's two active Web sites are visited often. In fact, a recent letter to members requesting them to submit their e-mail addresses if they were interested in high-value, last-minute opportunities resulted in over 5,000 names in just two weeks.

In another 6-week campaign, United Airlines Silver Wings Plus gave away 25,000 bonus miles to each senior who visited the Web site to find out about a promotion for Renaissance cruises. However, it was what visitors found on the Web site itself that resulted in confirmed reservations for 200 cabins on Renaissance cruises.

Now that Silver Wings Plus members have discovered the joy of surfing the Web, Danielson is confident that the seniors in this program won't forget that it was United Airlines Silver Wings Plus and IBM that flew them onto the digital highway and linked them with their families.

For more information please contact your IBM Marketing Representative or IBM Business Partner.™

Visit our Web site at www.internet.ibm.com

For more information about United Airlines Silver Wings Plus and travel values go to www.silverwingsplus.com and www.on-call.com

For more information on Catapult computer and Internet workshops go to www.pbt.com

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G325-0753-00