



الإتihad  
ETIHAD  
HOLIDAYS

## Etihad takes to the air with WTG

Etihad Airways is the national airline of the United Arab Emirates and provides passenger and cargo services for both short-haul and long-haul operations across the globe. The company has three cost divisions – airways, holidays and cargo.

While operations extend from Sydney to Toronto, Etihad Airways is based in Abu Dhabi and a vast majority of its operations for its 45 global stations is handled here. Since its inception in 2003 it has become the world's fastest growing airline, with 45 destinations today expected to expand to 70 by the year 2010.

### Aggressive Growth

The airline itself is young. Within four years it has become the fastest growing airline in the history of commercial aviation, carrying 4.6 million passengers in 2007 on a fleet of 37 aircraft. However Etihad has ambitious plans for the future with an aggressive strategy for increasing sales for Etihad Holidays and Etihad Airways based on a digital strategy focusing initially on a new website that would centre on outbound holidays from the UAE, then at a later stage add inbound to the offering.

Integral to this programme of growth was the need to improve the online presence of Etihad Holidays. Whilst the company had a very basic website, it didn't provide the range of information that holiday-makers required, nor did it reflect the new corporate branding for the company.

The proposed site was therefore to be constructed to appeal to residents of UAE and expatriates in the GCC or Gulf Cooperation Council region who were looking for holidays to key Etihad destinations.



## A Partnership Approach

Key for Etihad was the selection of a partner who would initially help it create a non-transactional site, whilst updating its branding and styling to reflect above the line promotional activity, in particular the brochures used to promote holiday packages.

The team at Etihad were looking to achieve a number of objectives with this project, not least of which was the need to driver more visitors to the site in an effort to increase the number of holiday bookings taken. Other key objectives of the new site included:

- ▶ The promotion of different holiday destinations and new packages
- ▶ Promotion of conversion channels which needed to include phone numbers and new retail outlets
- ▶ A new provision for online forms for information requests, brochures, call centre call backs and in-home visit requests

- ▶ Tactical promotional area for guerrilla marketing of key packages to stimulate Etihad Airline seat sales for distressed inventory
- ▶ Quick and simple updating of tactical promotions

Furthermore the Airline was also looking to develop a comprehensive contact database for future Customer Relationship Management activity, as well as implementing applications to enable the team to further understand its existing customer base and their online needs and behaviour patterns.

## A Design Powerhouse

Etihad chose WTG, a UK based business and technology consultancy focused on the delivery of innovative web based solutions for the public and commercial sectors. Its strategy is to work with best-of-breed product vendors in portal, CMS, collaboration and search technologies.

For Etihad the business objectives were clear. The new website had to give the user:

- ▶ An improved information architecture and greater speed to content
- ▶ The means to easily find out about Etihad routes and holidays
- ▶ Information about the various destinations
- ▶ A clear 'call to action'
- ▶ A clear 'user-journey'
- ▶ A visual interface that was distinctive, on-brand, compelling, user friendly and accessible

Jeremy Willmott, Head of Digital Systems, Etihad Holidays stated: "We needed a partner who demonstrated an intuitive understanding of our business need. WTG not only had an impressive track record, but it impressed us with its proposed plans for workshops on our brand, target audience and design considerations. And all that before it started any technical implementation!"

**“The way the WTG team has deployed the website against tight deadlines and to budget has really impressed us. It has been a fantastic delivery, which has addressed a number of key business and communications objectives. We now have a website that is distinctive, on-brand, compelling, user-friendly and accessible, which is a tremendous result within four weeks!”**

*Jeremy Willmott, Head of Digital Systems, Etihad Holidays*

“WTG made a number of critical recommendations, including the view that the new site should exude luxury and be inspirational, that the content should have breathing space on clear white pages and give it an air of sophistication, and that all calls to action needed to be subtle whilst being displayed on every page. This was absolutely in line with our thinking,” he added.

It was this design-led brief and approach that was critical to the project. As well as running a ‘look and feel’ workshop to flesh out the designs, WTG also maintained constant contact with the team at Etihad to ensure that at every stage of the site’s development, alterations, amendments and improvements could be rapidly made.

WTG also had a number of key considerations to make on the technical implementation and construction of the site. These included:

- ▶ Best practice usability standards
- ▶ W3C Accessibility standards (WCAG 1.0)

- ▶ Any XHTML had to be 1.0 strict
- ▶ Templated .aspx pages had to be developed in .NET 2005 v3.0
- ▶ Finally it had to meet SEO standards

Strict content guidelines were also drawn up following the ‘look and feel’ workshops. These encompassed:

- ▶ Inspirational imagery
- ▶ All destination information
- ▶ Holiday information – including dates, prices and hotels
- ▶ Booking information including new retail store information
- ▶ Guerrilla best-deal information
- ▶ Tactical campaign promotional information

WTG delivered the website within a four week period, from the initial engagement to release and the new site going live.

Jeremy Willmott, Etihad added: “The way the WTG team has deployed the website against tight deadlines and to budget has really impressed us. It has been a fantastic delivery, which has addressed a number of key business

and communications objectives. We now have a website that is distinctive, on-brand, compelling, user-friendly and accessible, which is a tremendous result within four weeks!”

The new site now delivers information on the comprehensive range of holidays offered by Etihad in a clear and easy to follow manner. It also exudes Etihad’s attributes as a trusted and respected brand. For the business itself, the new site is critically able to push ‘time based’ products and offerings to the consumer in a tactical manner. Furthermore Etihad can now promote new routes and destinations as well as generate and increasing footfall for the Etihad retail outlets thereby increasing revenue and sales throughout the Group.

Finally the new site is at the forefront of Etihad’s plans for an Enterprise Customer Relationship Management revolution as it moves forward with the second phase of its Web strategy to establish ongoing dialogue with its customers.

---

## More about WTG

WTG is a business and technology consultancy focused on the delivery of innovative web solutions to the commercial and public sectors. After assessing your needs and gaining an understanding of your organisation, we will recommend the technology solutions most likely to help you achieve your strategic goals.

Embracing best-of-breed Portal, CMS, Collaboration and Enterprise Search technologies, our web-based solutions will allow you to:

- ▶ Improve the way your organisation works
- ▶ Connect your newly-extended enterprise
- ▶ Increase the flow of your business data
- ▶ Secure your IT infrastructure
- ▶ Raise your levels of productivity

### WTG

Fifth Floor  
76 Hammersmith Road  
London W14 8UD

T: +44 (0) 207 339 8600

F: +44 (0) 207 339 8601

E: [info@wtg.co.uk](mailto:info@wtg.co.uk)

[www.wtg.co.uk](http://www.wtg.co.uk)