



Takeflite White Paper – Software Automation and Taking your Airline Online

We originally started the Takeflite service in 2001 to make it economic for Airlines and Tour Operators to gain access to enterprise computing services instead of having all their information spread across different physical sites, written on bits of paper and excel spreadsheets. With Takeflite, all information including online bookings is stored in one safe place. Your data gets entered once and checked many times. This means accurate information is available in real-time to everyone (staff, agents, customers, suppliers, management) from virtually anywhere (office, home, airports while travelling ...) at any time. Because Takeflite has current information that everyone can get to, it's different to systems where customers and suppliers and people outside the office are excluded. It changes your business and empowers people who are scared of computers, because it actually works and adds value and is worth the effort. Takeflite is a paradigm shift from manual systems, one-off developments or expensive per-user priced legacy systems.

Our potential customers often come to us when confronted with the task of trying to add internet bookings onto an existing computer system. The reasons for taking your business online stack up, with all stakeholders having appropriate access to accurate real-time availability of remaining seats, while your customers do your work for you and the phone rings less. But it's not just a matter of just adding a webpage to your existing system; thinking so can lead to unreliable outcomes and throwing good money after bad. To be reliable and secure, an online system needs to be housed in a Data-Centre and maintained every day by experts. There is sometimes a desire to "own" your systems, but an online system is like buying insurance; you talk to your local insurance company who outsources risk to a broker who outsources to Lloyds of London. As an airline or tour operator, it makes sense to stick to core business and get help from the Takeflite experts, just like we get help from our suppliers (e.g. Data-Centre out of Sydney and & email hosting out of Canada & SEO out of Melbourne etc). Takeflite has the capacity you would expect from a service running 30+ airlines and tour operators; don't be sucked into the risk of a "one off" build. The devil is in the detail and the key is to get a commodity service from a responsive company with a consulting arm, so you get up and running immediately and can then fine tune the bits you need over time as those needs emerge.

Pricing for "vanilla" Takeflite is a small start-up fee of a few thousand with a continuing monthly service fee thereafter (sensible minimum monthly charges apply). This covers:

1. Software licence lease;
2. Tier1 Data-Centre Server Farm (including generators and firewalls and network charges etc);
3. Disaster Recovery facilities;
4. System Maintenance (intrusion detection and security & capacity planning) and backups/logging;
5. 24 hour fault support – we monitor system faults that get automatically emailed to us as they happen;
6. Continuing development (typically one release a month from 4 developers working full time);
7. A lot of blood sweat and tears, which you'd otherwise be shedding!

How do we provide more for less? We have taken a "commodity" approach to providing the Takeflite service, where each month you just lease the slice you need from the overall pie. Providing Takeflite is the broadly the "right fit" for you in terms of functionality and you are willing and able to make minor process adjustments to "fit" your business to the Takeflite service, the advantages of the commodity approach are large:

1. You get to take advantage of the AU\$4.5M+ of investment already made;
2. Continuing development costs are less than 1/30th of what they would be if you were going it alone, because the investment gets shared across all customers. How much will it cost in time & money to add that new field on when you need it? With Takeflite it's either there already and just needs turned on with a site setting, or you only pay for your share (where it will be of use to others);
3. You get to budget for continuing maintenance, rather than getting hit with unpleasant annual surprises and potential disaster. When margins get tight, it's tempting to cut spending on maintenance despite the perils. The resulting costs from system downtime and lost data are devastating for a business;
4. You get to take advantage of a huge shared infrastructure i.e. if the office burns down, just get a new PC and you are up and racing again. No backup or disaster recovery headaches.

But please don't think of Takeflite as an expense to your business, because it will inevitably be a saving. If your business is getting too complex to manage (i.e. more than a few aircraft), then Takeflite probably provides the means for almost immediate savings, namely:

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1. You reduce head count, which saves directly at least AU\$20K annually. We haven't had a client yet who hasn't reassigned staff to other duties and ultimately been in the position to either increase services using the same staff or reduce head count. The un-quantified benefits include the saved management time from not having to deal with the inevitable staff issues, which are part and parcel of hiring/maintaining each staff member;
2. With online bookings, you are making money from customers after hours and when everyone is busy on the phone. So if you get an online presence, your turnover (as well as quality of life) will increase through using Takeflite. Past experience suggests an increase in turnover of 30% is achievable within a year where you have spare capacity;
3. We have found that customers don't invoice for about 10% of services provided. This might be because the pilot doesn't fill in the trip sheet, or the piece of paper drops behind the counter, or the customer makes a few changes to the booking and it gets missed;
4. No server is required. Servers are expensive to buy, setup, maintain and need to be replaced every 3 years or they fall off manufacturer support. With Takeflite, you also save on invisible automation costs like hosting charges and annual SSL certificate charges (if you forget to do this, your service stops);
5. The Takeflite service includes the server internet data charges. Many clients come to us with war stories about paying huge excess data charges through running inefficient apps & processes over the internet. Takeflite is network efficient and we take the risk;
6. You get to save on phone tolls e.g. one medium operator saved AU\$3.5K per month. Staff no longer have to phone each other as much and you probably don't need to pay a phone line rental for the EFTPOS machine, nor upgrade EFTPOS machines every so often at huge cost;
7. You can make the changes you need yourself. You save on support costs for computer people (typically AU\$75-AU\$175 per hour) and stationary costs, because everything is at your fingertips and online. For example, when you need to change your terms and conditions, your call centre staff can make the change and it's instantly available on all your tickets and websites. Setup new packages and routes in minutes.
8. Takeflite facilitates taking on new contracts, because you don't need to setup new systems or hire new staff. Turn on the relevant module and watch the bookings roll in from the internet. Imagine what it would mean to your business if you had the confidence to take on a new contract, because you could accurately gauge and manage the anticipated demands;
9. Having trouble providing accurate compliance figures to airports and authorities? Sometimes end up paying authorities more than you should? If information is in one place, it's easy to report on and the 200 template reports in Takeflite cover most things you might want to look at. Need a different report? One-off reports provided at reasonable rates;
10. How much does it cost your business when you run a Cessna Caravan but only have 2 customers on board? A lot. Having information available at all times to all stakeholders is important for managing costs in a business;
11. Can you effectively and dynamically manage your yield for scheduled services spanning many flight legs, dropping prices and availability for under-subscribed services and raising them for over-subscribed services? How do you respond to competitive pressures on a route? Can you spot-price certain routes for charters? Is your pricing the right mixture of consistent and flexible? Do you really know if you've made a profit at the end of a job? Do you know if you're under (or over) quoting on a charter route? Takeflite's web-services fare-engine provides the answer. One fare-engine to rule them all!
12. If a 5 minute system outage is bad news, how bad is a day or a week? How much damage would there be if all your information disappeared forever with a computer failure or a fire? This is happening to businesses like yours every day. Don't be the next victim. The biggest advantage of Takeflite is that it's a toolkit which enables you to have your business information secured in an AU\$80 Million Data-Centre facility. Takeflite is the software application service which gives you access to this infrastructure. With Takeflite, you can afford this. Can you afford to be without it?

Some general thoughts when contemplating going software automation and taking your business online:

1. When automating, you need to start small and then build on success. Work out a couple of the biggest issues you are facing and address them first;
2. Notwithstanding point (1), be aware that what you think are your major issues may turn out not to be once you get started. This doesn't matter altogether, in that the benefits of improving your business will inevitably pay off, but it reinforces not to get too hung up on any one detail and to use a software service solution with some depth;
3. Beware "magic bullet" software that will solve all your problems. Industry figures suggest you won't get started on automation for less than AU\$100K (at Takeflite we're still going at AU\$4.5M+). This shouldn't discourage the desire to make tomorrow better than today, but it does encourage taking a "managed risk" approach which will pay off for your business in the short, medium and long term;
4. If a solution isn't in use within a month or two, chances are it won't be relevant when it arrives. Customer processes are just too dynamic for long lead times. Don't dice with disaster;
5. Get 3 quotes with references! You'll find we stack up well in terms of what we do and how much it costs.

Contact the friendly Takeflite team at www.tflite.com today!