



Booking.com

Outsourcing with ease through rebadging



Case study

Client profile

As one of the world's leading digital travel companies, Booking.com invests in the technology that helps take the friction out of travel. Booking.com connects millions of travelers with memorable experiences, a range of transport options, and incredible places to stay — from homes to hotels and much more. As one of the world's largest travel marketplaces for both established brands and entrepreneurs of all sizes, Booking.com enables properties all over the world to reach a global audience and grow their businesses.¹

Industry

Online travel platform

“The Booking.com mission is to make it easier for everyone to experience the world.”

— Booking.com website



¹ Booking.com, About Booking.com™

Outsourcing with ease through rebadging

Operational overview

Faced with various cost and demand challenges, Booking.com opted to shift its customer experience (CX) operations from an in-house model to an outsourced one managed by external experts beginning in 2015.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Customer care for travelers and accommodations (B2B)

CHANNELS

Phone, Email, Chat, Social Media, App/Play Store Reviews



42

NATIVELY SUPPORTED
LANGUAGES

26

CITIES SERVED
ACROSS

23

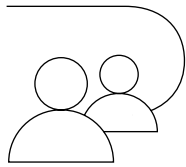
COUNTRIES

12 of 14

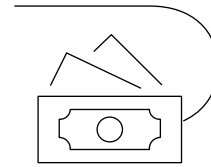
BOOKING.COM SITES WERE
TRANSITIONED TO TP

Business challenges

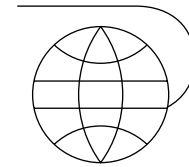
To achieve sustainable business success and growth in an ever-evolving business landscape, it has become table stakes to proactively identify ways to improve enterprise capabilities and outcomes for the end consumer. However, like many companies in the OTA industry, Booking.com faced several challenges around managing customer support that required a strategic resolution to unlock long-term value.



Highly seasonal and fluctuating demand, driving the need to ramp up and scale down resources quickly



High cost of maintaining offices and staff in multiple global locations



Need for a global operating model to address demand from multiple geographies and languages

It was imperative that Booking.com strengthen its support footprint and scale up delivery capabilities to meet demand from across the globe and eventually restructure its global delivery team to minimize costs.

While there were already conversations about rebadging, workforce laws, particularly in European countries, are notably complex. Further, legal requirements related to work councils and employee representatives made the project seem daunting. Still, it had become apparent that:

THERE WAS A NEED FOR MORE AGILITY AND EFFICIENCY

Handling customer support operations was not a core competency for Booking.com, and supporting everything from flight reservations to hotel check-ins was simply a demanding and complicated endeavor. Add to that the highly seasonal nature of the business — Booking.com had been hiring 5,000-6,000 customer experts for just 12 weeks every summer.

RAPID TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS CANNOT BE IGNORED

With the rapid evolution of AI tools, it's challenging for companies to remain proficient in all new advancements and understand how to properly incorporate them into their existing ecosystem. Plus, automating more interactions over time can be more difficult than expected due to complex data integration requirements. As with other businesses across industries, it is imperative that travel organizations have aligned data fields. Additionally, in a heavily regulated environment such as travel, rules and guidelines that vary by destination could further complicate any increased use of generative AI.

To augment and address gaps in its business processes and fast-track its transformation journey, Booking.com needed to develop a strategic partnership with a business services provider. This meant transcending traditional third-party engagement approaches, which are primarily reactive and modeled around existing problems and lacking shared accountability for improving outcomes for the end customer. A strategic partnership anchored on mutually beneficial outcomes, on the other hand, would allow Booking.com to access personalized services that meet current and future needs, co-create solutions, leverage synergies, share best practices, and optimize operational performance.

Solution

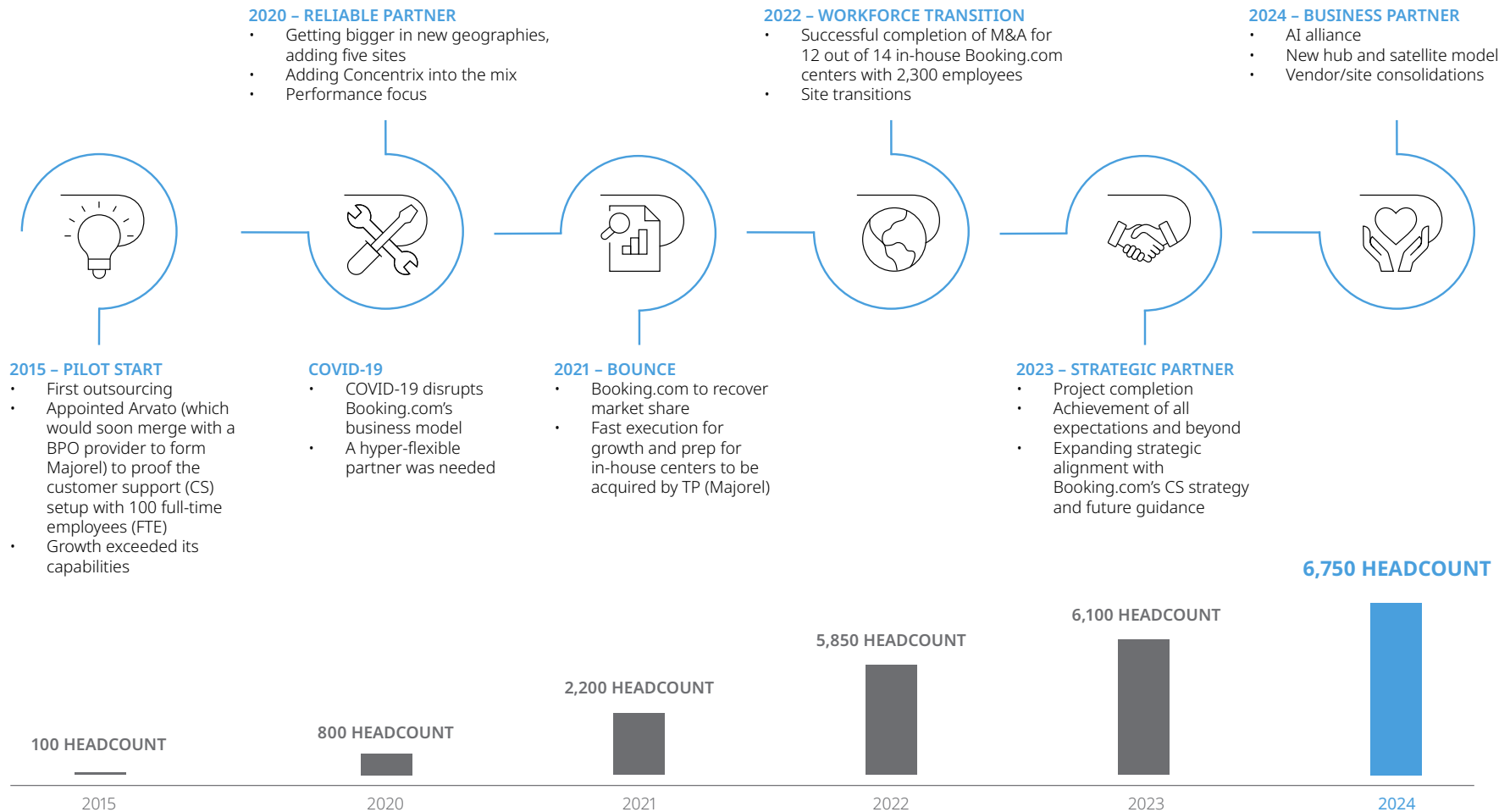
Booking.com's partnership with TP capitalized on the strategic nature of business process services (BPS), which plays a vital role in enabling enterprises to reduce costs, improve efficiencies, and focus on growth and innovation. In 2015, Booking.com piloted the outsourcing of its customer experience management (CXM) support with TP (Majorel at that time) for a few of its locations in Europe. Following these initial successes, Booking.com consulted TP to develop a global operations model, and the outsourcing footprint was extended to APAC, LATAM, and North America.

In 2018, Booking.com undertook a rebadging project to reduce its high operations costs. This meant turning to TP for support in conducting the exercise and leveraging its expertise in global operations. TP took over the management of operations of more than 10 global delivery centers, shutting down certain locations and consolidating service lines to minimize redundancies. By 2020, Booking.com's delivery capacity had been scaled up threefold.

In late 2022, Booking.com began a strategic transition of both their workforce and facilities to convert their CX operations into a more flexible, resilient, global platform. The situation was somewhat unique due to the number of geographies involved. The number of local languages and jurisdictions also increased complexity.



Booking.com evolution



Rebadging done right

Traditional transitions to an externally managed model involve downsizing the client's in-house workforce and ramping up a new workforce from the service provider's side. This activity can pose numerous challenges, including knowledge loss, reputational damage and negative press from layoffs, and operational delays. On the other hand, through rebadging, the client can seamlessly transition its in-house workforce to become employees of the service partner, eliminating typical concerns, accelerating the transition, and elevating employee loyalty by reinforcing their value in delivering the human-centric, empathetic experiences that frustrated travelers expect.

With Booking.com facing high-cost markets, low monitoring, and inconsistent language support, TP launched a robust rebadging process.

Phase 1

A meticulous site strategy that reshaped support

With right-shore languages and optimal geographies, TP guided the creation of scalable, cost-effective, and consistent multilingual support.

Phase 2

Support consistency

TP drove consistency through site consolidation, fostering language-focused hubs that harmonized support roles, increasing efficiency, and setting the stage for larger-scale operations per language.

Phase 3

Revolutionizing service strategy

TP optimized channel management, embraced automation, and achieved operational excellence through process optimization and technology, ensuring seamless interactions.

By maintaining Booking.com's positive brand image, TP enabled high-speed transformation while balancing the cost of change.

A formula for success

Booking.com seamlessly transitioned its workforce, transferred ownership of 12 of its 14 sites to TP, and divested from its regulatory liabilities.

Classic Rebadging

Acquisition of the employee

Transfer of decision
at staff level

TP employment contract

Workforce Migration

Acquisition of the employer

No transfer of decision

Employee contract intact

Site and asset acquisition

Liabilities and litigations

By applying proven change management processes, the transition was executed smoothly with no employee attrition service interruptions.

Real results

Booking.com saw real, tangible business impact as a result of this close partnership. They achieved their operating cost reduction goals in addition to successfully transitioning their CX operations to TP.

50%

OF THE EXISTING SETUP
WAS RETAINED

95%

OF EMPLOYEES
TRANSITIONED TO
NEW IT IN 3 DAYS

0

NEGATIVE PR OR
REPUTATIONAL IMPACT

Preparing for an unpredictable future

Tough market situations can manifest quickly at any time, as COVID-19 demonstrated. The economic shock of the pandemic and the staggering attrition during “The Great Resignation” have only strengthened the case for needing greater business agility and adaptability. In executing the workforce migration, Booking.com has uncovered not only an opportunity for significant future cost savings but also a readiness for rapid and unexpected change. Indeed, finding the right rebadging partner has helped Booking.com shape and implement a transition strategy that integrates performance and governance.

Having performed various rebadging models, with more than 100,000 people successfully rebadged, TP's proven rebadging processes and best practices have enabled clients to achieve seamless transitions and drive transformation through advanced generative AI and data analytics solutions. These strategic partnerships have resulted in long-term cost reduction, expedited transformation, staffing flexibility, business continuity, and talent retention.

Moving forward, Booking.com will spend less on building its in-house centers and limit its liability in high-cost labor markets. From managing 85% of its CXM in-house in 2019, Booking.com now externally sources 95% of its CXM. It stays deeply involved in its relationship with TP, which is characterized by transparent communication, a strong focus on people, and shared goals.



