

A MAGAZINE FOR AIRLINE EXECUTIVES

OCTOBER 2003

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# Asia/Pacific Carriers Open a Portal

*Leading Asia/Pacific carriers team with Travelocity to launch the first region-wide online travel portal — ZUJI.*

■ By Frank Fotea and Hans Belle | *Ascend* Contributors

Sixteen of the leading Asia/Pacific carriers are putting their footprint on e-commerce in the region.

With travelers in Asia/Pacific following the U.S. trend of booking travel online, the carriers have collectively launched an online portal called “ZUJI,” a Mandarin Chinese word that loosely translates as “footprint.” The site, which is a joint venture between the Asia/Pacific carriers and Travelocity, a Sabre Holdings company, is the only one-stop site dedicated to Asia/Pacific travelers. The site — which offers inventory from thousands of airlines, hotels and rental car companies — enables travelers to easily search and book the best values on flights, hotels and rental cars.

ZUJI, which offers the region’s most sophisticated online airfare search engine, aims to become a world-class Web site by providing its customers with an efficient, user-friendly environment to plan and purchase travel online.

ZUJI draws upon Travelocity’s technology and experience in the U.S. market and shares its resources across a large geographic region. Chief Executive Officer Scott Blume is focused on one goal — making ZUJI the preeminent online travel site in Asia/Pacific.

“Ours is the only online travel portal with a regional network in Asia/Pacific whose core business is travel bookings in real time,” he said. “To date, the ZUJI network comprises customized, local language sites in

Australia, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong — allowing us access to over 30 million Internet users — with more sites to come.

“We have taken world-leading technology and customized the offerings to local markets,” he said. “This gives us considerable benefits in terms of cost of development and the ability to drive revenue from that development across multiple countries in the region. We expect that by the end of 2004, almost 10 percent of travel bookings will be made online in Asia/Pacific, and we intend to be the leading portal in this space in our part of the world.”

One of ZUJI’s unique strengths is its ability to quickly bring special deals and content to market.



A user-friendly graphical user interface makes it easy for travelers to access the content of the ZUJI Web site, which includes thousands of airlines, hotels and car rental companies.

One of the many exciting features of the portal is the Flight Guru, which provides a host of search options for flights, including alerting passengers of free stopovers and enabling passengers to pre-select seats on certain flights.



Photo courtesy of ZUJI

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**Scott Blume, chief executive officer for ZUJI, is positioning the Asia/Pacific travel portal, powered by Travelocity, to take advantage of a growing trend in the region toward online booking.**

“We offer an extremely compelling proposition for our suppliers,” Blume said. “We e-mail our members travel deals that are tailored to match specific interests, and we can mine our member database to reach travelers who have searched for specific destinations and contact them directly with customized and personalized e-mails. We can also offer site real-estate promotional space — all within a 24-hour timeline. It’s a short, sharp way of moving product. Additionally, through our distribution alliances with Yahoo! and ninemsn,

we can access between 20 to 25 million Internet users throughout Asia/Pacific each month. It’s a very fast and effective method of bringing deals to market.”

Sam Gilliland, president and chief executive officer of Travelocity, agreed speed to market is a key benefit to the airlines that provide content for the site.

“It is exciting to see how the airlines are embracing ZUJI as a competitive tool with its ability to bring fares to market quickly,” he said.

ZUJI, headquartered in Singapore, conducted a soft launch with Web sites

in Australia and its home country in 2002. A full marketing push began in August to build awareness and increase the membership base. Even before the push, however, the portal added sites



in late 2002 in Taiwan and Hong Kong, and it is looking to add sites in Korea, Malaysia, Brunei and New Zealand in the next several months. ZUJI officials

“We are not only actively building a regional network, but a strong and compelling brand ....”

said the response to the soft launch indicated that Asian markets are ready to embrace online travel. Once the effects of the conflict in Iraq and the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome diminished, the portal's booking levels quickly increased, exceeding pre-SARS levels.

“We're seeing more and more travelers choosing to book and buy flight, hotel and car rental content from ZUJI, and we anticipate that this trend will continue,” Blume said. “We'll soon reveal a new hotel booking path, which has been designed and developed in conjunction with Abacus. We have a dedicated commitment to constantly improving the site and ensuring our customers have the best technology and travel tools in Asia/Pacific.

“We are not only actively building a regional network, but a strong and compelling brand, which features our ‘Travel Guru’ personality,” Blume said. “We're experiencing consistent growth in all of our markets.”

“The outcome is ‘win-win.’ Our members learn of deals to places they are interested in traveling to, and suppliers have access to a targeted audience.”

ZUJI's travel tools are designed to enhance the customer experience. Its “Price Guru” tool is a customized fea-

ture that allows members to select five preferred destinations and to be notified via an automated e-mail message or on-site updates when a flight to a specific destination meets a pre-set price criteria. This gives ZUJI members the advantage of being the first to know about inventory-controlled promotional deals.

“The outcome is ‘win-win,’” Blume said. “Our members learn of deals to places they are interested in traveling to, and suppliers have access to a targeted audience.”

Combining the expertise of the region's leading airlines and Travelocity enabled ZUJI to overcome a number of challenges, including the region's multiple languages, currencies and local laws. ZUJI worked with Travelocity's Sydney-based development center to create country-specific sites in native languages using local currency with secure transactions through VeriSign Payflow. To date, ZUJI offers sites in three languages (including two variations of Chinese) utilizing four Asian currencies. ZUJI also has adapted to the local markets, which have different levels of development and infrastructure to support e-commerce, such as the penetration levels of credit cards and costs of Internet access.

The state-of-the-art net fare booking engine, powered by Travelocity, was also developed specifically for the region.

Gilliland said the partnership holds great promise for the future.

“Travelocity pioneered the online travel space, and we have more than seven years' experience in the world's most competitive online travel market — the United States,” he said. “We have learned that success in this industry is driven by continuous investment in technology and the customer experience, focused marketing and distribution, and great value content. ZUJI has these ingredients.”

The unequaled ZUJI sites built by Travelocity have met the unique needs of the Asia/Pacific marketplace. Travelocity quickly realized it could not merely

## Sweet Sixteen

Sixteen leading Asia/Pacific airlines have joined with Travelocity to form ZUJI, a one-stop travel portal for the region:

- All Nippon Airways
- Cathay Pacific Airways
- China Airlines
- EVA Airways
- Garuda Indonesia
- Dragonair
- Japan Airlines
- Japan Air System
- Malaysia Airlines
- Northwest Airlines
- Philippine Airlines
- Qantas Airways
- Royal Brunei Airlines
- SilkAir
- Singapore Airlines
- United Airlines

transplant technology and business systems from the United States without finding innovative ways to address the region's unique landscape. ZUJI, with the knowledge and support of the region's leading airlines and unmatched technology from Travelocity, is uniquely positioned to meet the challenges of providing online service to the region's traveling public. 

*Frank Fotea is Travelocity's vice president Asia/Pacific.*

*Hans Belle is vice president of marketing, Asia/Pacific for Sabre Airline Solutions.*