American Airlines

**CUSTOMER SUCCESS**

# American Airlines Merger-Driven Data Transformation Takes Off

## Data Migration and Data Governance

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*The Syniti team has helped us to understand more about the complexities and nuances of our data than we ever knew existed. Now, they're helping us to build on this foundation as we establish our ongoing data governance capabilities."*

Mark Mitchell
Managing Director, People Shared Services
American Airlines

**Industry**
Global Airline Company

**Headquarters**
Forth Worth, TX

The merger of American Airlines and US Airways required a major initiative, called "Project Spring", to consolidate HR and payroll data across the newly combined airline's 130,000+ active employees and 500,000+ former employees. A Premier SAP Solution Extensions Partner, Syniti partnered with AA to lead data migration and information governance efforts for this program. The project involved migrating employee populations in legacy US Airways and AA systems to SAP SuccessFactors and HANA Enterprise Cloud Platform, a single, cloud-based platform.

**The Company**

American Airlines, Inc. (AA) is the world's largest airline when measured by fleet size, revenue, scheduled passengers carried, scheduled passenger kilometers flown, and number of destinations served. AA, together with its regionaL partners, operates an extensive international and domestic network with an average of nearly 6,700 flights per day to nearly 350 destinations in more than 50 countries. AA has ten airport hubs and handles 51.1 million passengers annually with an average of 140,000 passengers daily.

**Project Outline**

As one of AA's largest post-merger data transformation programs, Project Spring demanded superior data migration and information governance capabilities to effectively migrate comprehensive legacy employee data from SAP HCM, Oracle HR and multiple supporting system into SAP SuccessFactors and HANA Enterprise Cloud Platform. The new cloud-based HR and payroll solution would then serve as a single, cloud-based solution to manage all HR data.

# Implementation Highlights

Assessing legacy data and moving it to the new platform was a significant undertaking that required key data decisions early in the process. For instance, the company needed to standardize effective employee date processes to properly convert employee history and prevent future complications regarding key calculations, such as 401(k) eligibility or seniority, which typically rely on the historical effective date of an HR event. Syniti helped AA identify and work through these types of decisions, as well as how to qualify which employee records are relevant to be converted into the new system versus archived.

Approaching data conversion as a project-wide initiative, Syniti worked with AA, SAP, internal audit teams and SI partner Deloitte to ensure a unified "core data team" approach that included all project stakeholders, including downstream consumers of employee data. The core data team designated an AA data quality team, encompassing a broad coalition of corporate HR community stakeholders ranging from payroll and benefits to compensation, 401(k), tax, finance, IT, and talent. Additionally, the process involved defining an accountable data owner for each field in SuccessFactors including mapping rules, data collection and validation.

AA utilized SAP Advanced Data Migration by Syniti to navigate through all steps of the data conversion process and validation. The solution – which is powered by Synit's Knowledge Platform (SKP) – served as a web-based means of collecting and controlling all constructed data, as well as facilitating workflows and manager approvals. Every change was logged and audited for issue traceability and compliance.

Throughout the process, AA used the ADM solution to implement automated industry-leading data quality metrics. Syniti's technology was able to combine preload error checks, load failures, and open data defects to provide a transparent view of the overall data quality as it related to known business rules and mapping requirements.

# Main Goals

- **Execute Post-Merger HR Data Transformation** – Successfully assess, harmonize and migrate employee data from multiple systems into a single, cloud-based HR and payroll system
- **Maintain Security and Accuracy of Employee and Payroll Data** – Implement automated business rules to ensure proper treatment and cleansing of data across full data transformation
- **Automate Data Quality Processes and Reporting** – Deploy a collaborative data quality solution that automatically enforces HR business rules and offers stakeholder visibility into error resolution through ongoing dashboard reporting
- **Implement Proactive Information Governance Across HR Data** – Establish forward-looking, sustainable information governance practices that leverage knowledge and reuse of HR data after go-live is complete

## Why Syniti Data Replication was Selected

AA was faced with significantly complex employee data due to multiple acquisitions and decades of projects and union contracts. The stakes of an implementation of this magnitude were incredibly high, and the security and accuracy of employee and payroll data was paramount. With firsthand knowledge of Syniti's proven solutions, expertise and reputation, SAP and Deloitte jointly advised AA to utilize Syniti as the gold standard partner for data transformation project success.

## Results

> **"** The HR and payroll system integration to new SAP SuccessFactors and HEC platforms was one of the most complex programs we've attempted as part of the merger between AA and US Airways. During the journey, our team partnered with Synit's consultants every step of the way, and we could not have done it without their tools, their leadership and professional expertise."
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> Mark Mitchell
> Managing Director, People Shared Services
> American Airlines

As a result of the data migration initiative, AA successfully converted data for more than 335,000 current and former employees to SuccessFactors – implementing Talent, Recruiting & Onboarding, and Employee Central modules. It also migrated payroll data for over 35,000 employees to SAP HANA Enterprise Cloud for payroll processing. To accomplish this massive effort, Syniti's SKP helped AA extract over 690 million records during the cutover period from seven different source and target systems, as well as create nearly 10,000 business rules to properly transform all legacy data. The solution generated over 2,600 reports to support error resolution and validation.

Syniti also advised AA on its information governance strategy for the initiative and developed data quality metrics dashboards to help drive clarity, resolution for open data migration issues, and closed-loop open data remediation for ongoing governance. It also implemented best practices around reuse of data assets and knowledge captured during the migration process.

The final product resulted in higher than 99.9% automation of AA's employee data transformation, exceeding client and partner expectations along the way. Spearheading one of the largest cloud-based implementations in the industry, Synit's experts ensured secure, high-quality, and high performance data loads and extractions to and from SAP data centers.

## Syniti