

# Eurail.com Processes Reservations Four Times Faster with Self-Service Portal Built on Mendix

Since 2006, Eurail.com has been helping travelers throughout the world take unforgettable train journeys through Europe. More than 200,000 travelers each year choose Eurail.com. The organization has its head office in the Netherlands, with fulfillment centers operating in the United States, Ireland and Singapore. Eurail.com is specialized in the online sale of Eurail and Interrail cards. In order to improve its service approach, Eurail decided to further automate and streamline its reservation process.

Travelers using a Eurail or Interrail card must make reservations for certain train journeys inside Europe through Eurail.com. This process took place primarily by means of email correspondence. The traveler emailed Eurail.com which train he or she wanted to make a reservation for, and the employee then checked availability, made the reservation and notified the traveler.

## Labor-intensive reservations

“It was clear to everyone that the reservation process had to change”, says Janice Jie, head of reservations at Eurail.com. “While this working method put us close to the traveler, the increasing number of cards sold was making the situation untenable.” With an average of one hour per reservation, the process was too labor-intensive, and above all, the process was extremely error prone. “Both our staff and the travelers were ready for the next step: further professionalization of our reservation service”, explains Janice. “Two key questions were central in this: how could we work more efficiently using our existing IT systems, and how could we at least reach the breakeven point, based on the expected volume increases? It became clear that further automation of the reservation process was required.”

## A custom solution in three months

The peak season starts in April each year, and Eurail.com expected a 100% increase in the number of tickets sold. The reservation process had to be ready for the new season within a period of three months. “We needed a working solution, which could handle the challenges of the new season and could be realized quickly”, explains Janice. “We initially thought that a custom solution would not be feasible in such a short period, but nothing could have been further from the truth.”

## Self-service reservation portal

Eurail.com developed a self-service reservation portal in Mendix. “The major advantage of Mendix is that a new application can be developed at top speed, by making use of visual models instead of code. As a result, the business has insight into the application logic and structure during the process, and is (and feels) involved in the realization. The result can be viewed quickly in a working application, and feedback can be provided, where necessary. The end result is an application which is supported by the various stakeholders, with the right quality, functionality and design, and with a short time to market.”

## Integration and accessibility

An important precondition for the new self-service reservation portal was integration with existing systems. “A portal which was not integrated would have been a missed opportunity. And the link to the payment system and email system offers additional added value. Mendix supports this fully, as a result of which the entire reservation process is being automated further.”

It was also necessary for the system to be accessible both to staff and travelers, which requires the necessary authorization. “By developing a portal in which both Eurail.com employees and travelers can work, the reservation process is simplified and accelerated considerably for all parties. Travelers can

now log in to the portal, view their travel schedule and select the train they want with a single click, and we can then process this request. The status is transparent to everyone, everywhere and at any time”, according to Janice.

## Combination of agile and modern technology

In order to accelerate the development process, Eurail.com decided to develop the new application together with implementation partner ITvisors. Using the agile methodology, a working reservation portal was achieved in five sprints spread across 10 weeks. Janice: “ITvisors was able to translate our wishes perfectly—from sketching out the ideal process to actual technical implementation. The use of Mendix not only gave us access to the most modern technology; it also brought a new dynamism to our organization. It took a while to get used to taking decisions at high speed, but this also achieved a result at high speed. We are extremely pleased with the effective combination of agile and the modern development platform.”

## From 60 to 15 minutes

The new portal has ensured that the time required for a single booking has been reduced from almost an hour (53 minutes) to 15 minutes. This has ensured that Eurail.com is ready for the new season. Apart from other major cost savings, this means that a smaller Eurail.com team can now process twice as many reservations. The portal is also a major benefit to travelers. Rather than sending an email, they can now make a reservation for the right train with a single mouse click. Error sensitivity is reduced as a result.

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**Janice Jie**  
Head of Reservations  
Eurail.com

Thanks to this major step forward in professionalization, Eurail.com is showing that it places a high value on service. “The process of making a reservation for a train is now many times more efficient, better and easier,” explains Janice. “The results have exceeded all our expectations. And we have achieved better service for the traveler.”

## Eurail.com ...

- specializes in the online sale of Eurail and Interrail cards
- developed a self-service reservation portal at high speed
- realized a custom application in three months
- is ready for a 100% increase in reservations
- has reduced reservation processing time from 60 to 15 minutes
- is processing reservations four times as fast
- is ready to face the challenges of the new season
- is combining an agile working method with a modern development platform



Mendix helps enterprises achieve their digital goals. Our digital innovation platform empowers customers to bring new products to market, digitize customer engagement, and automate unique business processes. Facilitating an iterative, collaborative approach, the platform brings business and IT together to build and deploy innovative applications at the speed of ideas.

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