Opodo

Providing a Secure & Customer
Focused Online Travel Portal

Opodo

SOLUTION SUMMARY

Choosing the strongest level of encryption available, from the world's leading SSL Certificate Authority has always been important for Opodo to reassure their customers that their personal information (payment and personal details) entered into any of Opodo's Web sites remains private and secure.

By upgrading to Extended Validation (EV) SSL certificates from VeriSign, within a Managed PKI for SSL account, Opodo have chosen to deploy the latest standard in SSL in the easiest, and most cost-effective way. Moving to EV SSL makes Opodo's investment in Web site security even more visible throughout the online customer experience.

Industry
- Travel

Key Challenges
- Safeguard personal and sensitive financial information
- Demonstrate security consciousness and prove Web site authenticity

Solution
- VeriSign Secured® Seal
- VeriSign® Secure Site Pro with Extended Validation (EV) SSL Certificates
- VeriSign® MPKI for SSL

Results
- 10% uplift in completed sales after posting the VeriSign Secured Seal
- Reduction in overall spend on certificates and time required to manage them

+ Overview

Opodo is the first truly Pan-European travel service created to address the real needs of today's traveller. Opodo offers access to deals from over 500 airlines, 65,000 hotel properties, and more than 7,000 car rental locations worldwide—as well as package holidays and insurance, all on an easy to use, intuitive Web site.

Founded in 2001 by nine of Europe's leading airlines, Opodo began with an online presence in Germany, swiftly followed by the UK and France. The company is majority owned by Amadeus - the leading travel technology provider, and operates under the Opodo brand name in seven European markets and under the Travellink brand name in the Nordics.

Opodo was inspired to accommodate changing consumer lifestyles, and to reduce the overheads associated with ticketing, in order to pass on further cost savings to their customers. Travellers appreciate, now more than ever, the freedom and price advantage of booking online with the 'best-in-class' service Opodo offers.

+ Key Challenge

In 2001, at the company's inception, the Internet was viewed in a somewhat sceptical way, and some customers were unwilling to make purchases online. Online security, especially at this time, was considered to be of primary importance to Opodo. Overcoming consumers' fear of making purchases online was part of the mission of the Opodo brand, and building a strong feeling of trust and reliability was key to the success of the portal. Partnering with VeriSign to secure their sites was a natural choice.

Since this time, Opodo's aggressive acquisition strategy across Europe has driven the growth of the business and they now boast a strong position in the European online travel community serving more than 4 million passengers across Europe.

Opodo plans to continue double digit growth in 2009. "In uncertain economic times consumers are ever more careful with their money and this is where Opodo can make a real difference, providing a full travel service with the advantage of competitive pricing," comments Ignacio Martos, Chief Executive of Opodo.

With expansion in mind as well as a need for heightened efficiencies, Opodo began to review the costs associated with managing an increasing number of SSL certificates as well as the technology they were using to encrypt and secure their sites to make sure that they were offering the best available service to their customers.

+ Solution

Making cost efficiencies and overcoming the complications of managing a larger number of SSL certificates, due to the growth in web servers and domains, was made easy for Opodo by moving to a VeriSign Managed PKI for SSL account.

Managing requests for SSL certificates becomes a very manual and time consuming process when you need to request them on an individual basis, keep track of their expiry dates, and involve purchasing each time. With Managed PKI for SSL, Opodo now manages all of their SSL certificates through an easy-to-use and highly secure Web based application. Not only can they obtain a complete overview of their certificate inventory at any time, they can also issue, renew, replace and revoke certificates within a matter of minutes because their account is pre-authenticated.

VeriSign®

"We posted the VeriSign Secured Seal on the payment pages and found that completed sales rose by approximately 10% in comparison to the previous week's results. We immediately realised the impact that the trust factor can have on shopping basket abandonment rates and we have since published the VeriSign Seal on all the payment pages across our network of European sites."

Warren Jonas
Head of Service Management
Opodo

"VeriSign's MPKI for SSL Web based system has not only made my life a million times easier, freeing me up to do other things, but it's also helped us to significantly reduce our overall spend in terms of buying and managing our SSL certificates" says Sam McGuinness, Senior Network Engineer, Opodo.

Despite making cost efficiencies, Opodo are aware that they need to invest in 'state of the art' technology and rich features that will impact customer satisfaction if they are to continue to grow with such momentum. From a security perspective this has led Opodo's decision to upgrade from VeriSign Server Gated Cryptography (SGC) certificates[1] to VeriSign Secure Site Pro Extended Validation SSL certificates - the gold standard in SSL technology. Opodo offers the same strong encryption SGC technology as they have done since 2005, but Extended Validation certificates offer additional security features to customers which add to their overall online experience.

Using the latest standard in SSL security means that individuals using high security browsers such as Microsoft® Internet Explorer 7 (IE7), Firefox 3 or Opera 9.5 will be able to visually recognise a Web site's authenticity and security. This means that when visiting www.opodo.co.uk in IE 7, the browser turns the URL address bar a green colour as the secure session begins. The padlock and the certificate information can be easily seen at eye level, and the display next to the green bar toggles between the organisation name listed in the certificate and the Certificate Authority (in this case, VeriSign). Although older browsers will display Extended Validation SSL certificates with the same security symbols as existing SSL certificates, by clicking on the padlock, users can review the certificate information and rest assured that the web site they are visiting can be trusted. Extended Validation (EV) SSL certificates help achieve the highest level of consumer trust as they are issued with the strictest authentication standards of any SSL certificate.

Opodo uses Extended Validation SSL technology on their Web sites throughout Europe to protect personal and payment data for all their insurance, air, car, and hotel deals. Customer information held within the booking and registration process such as personal details, preferences, and even frequent flyer card numbers are all transmitted securely using VeriSign's market leading EV SSL encryption.

Choosing the right SSL Certificate Authority has always been important for Opodo, not only to reassure their public that any information entered into any of Opodo's Web sites remained private and secure. In 2006 Warren Jonas, Head of Service Management at Opodo at the time, tested the value of choosing VeriSign by running an experiment on the UK site. "We posted the VeriSign Secured Seal on the payment pages and found that completed sales rose by approximately 10% in comparison to the previous week's results. We immediately realised the impact that the trust factor can have on shopping basket abandonment rates and we have since published the VeriSign Seal on all the payment pages across our network of European sites."

"Any online business cannot underestimate the value of trust when looking to grow their customer base especially now that consumers are so aware of the risks of identity theft and are even more price conscious. Choosing VeriSign Extended Validation SSL helps us to build confidence with our customers and shows how determined we are to invest in the best SSL security available" says Keith Taylor, Head of Procurement, Opodo.

1. Without an SGC-enabled certificate in place, Web site visitors using certain older browsers and many Windows 2000 users will only receive 40- or 56-bit encryption.

Over 12 million people visit Opodo sites every month, and VeriSign® EV SSL certificates are installed across a host of Web servers to ensure that every single transaction is secure.

+ Results

Opodo continue to see double digit growth year on year and reached an EBITDA in 2008 of €14.4 million and over €1.3 billion in sales, which is a 26% sales increase over the comparable figure for 2007. By strategically managing their key suppliers and improving their relationship with them on ongoing projects they continue to streamline their operational costs.

+ Benefits of Improved Security

"We've already seen some extremely tangible benefits from placing the VeriSign Secured Seal on our sites and we're confident that Extended Validation SSL technology will have a positive effect on our customers' overall experience" continues Keith Taylor, Head of Procurement. "As an online organisation we know we need to be at the forefront of innovation and best practice but when customers can actually see that we're investing in their safety online, we know that we're doing everything we can to deliver a secure and reliable experience".

+ Why VeriSign?

VeriSign (NASDAQ: VRSN) is the trusted provider of Internet infrastructure services for the networked world. Billions of times daily, our SSL, authentication, identity protection, and registry services help companies and consumers all over the world to communicate and conduct commerce with confidence.

VeriSign is the leading Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) Certificate Authority enabling secure e-commerce and communications for Web sites, intranets, and extranets. VeriSign continues to lead the SSL certificate industry as a member of the CA/Browser Forum, a voluntary organisation currently focused on EV SSL certificates.

Visit us at www.VeriSign.co.uk for more information.