

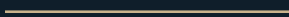
CLEARSKIES

—CONCIERGE—



Hawaii for 4 During Peak Summer Travel

Award space was only the beginning.



Structuring around limited award inventory.



The Situation

Client wanted a warm family gateway during peak June travel dates.

Trip Parameters

- 4 travelers
- Southern California → Kona (KOA)
- June 13-21
- **Cash pricing: \$2,892 roundtrip**

Available Currencies

- ~250k Amex MR
- ~53k Chase UR
- ~61k Capital One
- ~108k Atmos

INITIAL AWARD SIGNAL

SFO → KOA at 15k (each way)

At first glance, the Hawaii award space looked promising

But as usual, the real optimization challenge wasn't the long-haul segment. It was the full journey structure.

“Good saver space” was not automatically optimal.

Initial Routing

SNA → SFO → KOA

The instinctive move was to book all 4
SFO → KOA seats through Aeroplan.

The Friction

The positioning leg introduced a
problem:

SNA → SFO cash pricing was
disproportionately expensive.

The long-haul segment was not the entire optimization problem.

Splitting the bookings changed the economics.

Instead of booking all 4 seats on the same itinerary, the structure was split intentionally.

Split Structure

- 1 passenger booked directly via United using Chase UR
- 3 passengers booked via Aeroplan using Amex → AP
- Cash positioning costs reduced materially

Key Principle

Airlines do not always price inventory uniformly across passenger counts.

Searching:

- 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 Passengers...

... CAN REVEAL ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ECONOMICS.

Different passenger counts can reveal entirely different pricing and availability.

Partner space did not match airline space.

Stronger route found

CLD → SFO → KOA

This created a better originating airport for the family and improved overall journey economics.

Constraint

United had released only **2 seats** on CLD → SFO to Aeroplan partner inventory

Aeroplan could not book all 4 on the same award structure.

Optimization

- 2 passengers booked via partner award space
- Remaining passengers booked directly with the airline

The result was cleaner logistics and the ability to check bags through to destination.

This is where flexibility around: passenger splits | booking channels | currencies | ticket structures creates opportunities most travelers never see.

Better economics. Cleaner experience.

Initial “Workable” Structure

- ~135k points
- ~\$1,275 cash

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- Shorter layovers
 - Required claiming and rechecking baggage

Final Optimized Structure

- ~130k points
- ~\$750 cash vs. \$2,892 cash booking

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- Better airport
 - Cleaner logistics
 - Lower parking costs
 - Better overall travel days

The value came from structure.

Award inventory is not static

Searching different passenger counts can surface different pricing and availability.

1

Don't force uniformity

Sometimes the best structure uses multiple currencies, channels, itineraries, and passenger splits.

2

Partner inventory $\neq$
Airline inventory

United may show seats internally while releasing fewer seats to partners.

3

Separate itineraries are manageable

Separate itineraries can often be linked by calling or chatting with airline.

4

*Most people think points optimization is about finding saver space.
Often, the real value comes from intelligently structuring around
the limitations.*