

Dell

Dell is a welcome guest at Wyndham

WYNDHAM INTERNATIONAL

» **CHALLENGE** Increase deployment speed of servers and storage, improve consistency of configurations, reduce hardware costs, and maintain uptime in a centralized IT environment; increase storage capacity in the data center and at some hotels

» **SOLUTION** Replace more than half of all PCs and servers at Wyndham with Dell™ OptiPlex™ GX270 desktop systems and Dell PowerEdge™ 2650 servers using a standard configuration; deploy Dell PowerVault™ 775 network attached storage (NAS) systems and PowerVault external SCSI storage arrays for increased storage capacity

» **BENEFIT** Faster procurement, lower costs, and ease of ordering standard configurations using the Dell direct build-to-order model and Dell Premier Pages™ service; efficient project planning and budgeting by standardizing on a single vendor; high availability of Dell systems

Customer Spotlight



Dell checks into Wyndham hotels, lowering costs and speeding hardware deployment while maintaining high system uptime

Wyndham International is a hotel chain renowned for offering personalized service and sumptuous amenities at its primarily upscale and luxury hotels. Located in major cities, suburban areas, and resorts, Wyndham accommodations are geared toward providing business and leisure travelers with every convenience.



“When it comes to selling rooms, a centralized database enables our reservation staff to utilize room availability very efficiently”

Convenient, centralized IT model needs efficiency boost

In the hotel industry, third-party property management is prevalent. Even within a single chain, individual hotels may be managed by different companies. This decentralization is commonly reflected in hotel IT environments; it is not uncommon for each property in a chain to maintain its own IT infrastructure with little standardization among hotels. Wyndham is different from its competitors in that it operates and manages a large percentage of the more

than 170 properties in its portfolio—giving the company a degree of control that lets it incorporate hotels into a highly centralized IT infrastructure. This centralized IT model offers advantages to both Wyndham and its guests.

“When it comes to selling rooms, a centralized database enables our reservation staff to utilize room availability very efficiently,” says Andy Miller, director of network engineering at Wyndham. “Traditionally, hotels make a block of rooms available to Internet customers and

another block available to the internal reservation staff—but our employees deal with a single inventory, so they know minute to minute which rooms are available. Our system also gives customers on the Internet the capability to see real-time room availability.”

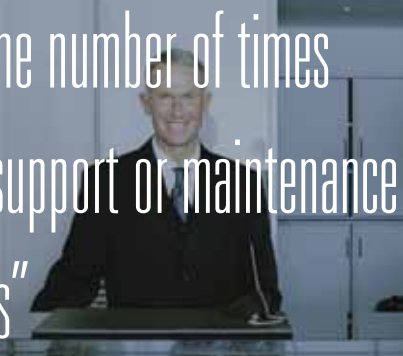
Having all reservation systems linked together also enables Wyndham to cross-sell against multiple hotels when availability is tight instead of putting the burden on customers to find another place to stay. Because the centralized IT environment helps produce revenue and offers great convenience, Wyndham is heavily invested in its architecture. However, system procurement, installation, and configuration processes were not as efficient—or cost-effective—as they could be.

Dell helps Wyndham improve procurement process and reduce costs

In 2000, Wyndham hired a new CTO whose arrival coincided with a decision to upgrade a large quantity of aging hardware. At the time, Wyndham purchased its systems from a local third-party technology integrator, who also configured and installed PCs and servers on-site. To improve the procurement process—and lower costs—the CTO asked Miller's department to send out a request for proposal (RFP) for bids on standardized PC, notebook, and server platforms.

“Dell won the RFP in 2000 by demonstrating an efficient procurement model that accelerates deployment and allows us to avoid the cost of a third-party integrator,” Miller says. “Because Dell configures the hardware and installs the software image at the factory, systems arrive at the hotels ready to roll. Dell also provides the Dell Premier Pages service—a dedicated extranet page that keeps our ordering information and standard configurations available online. We can simply log in and order systems with our preferred configuration, so our configurations are more consistent.”

“I can count on one hand the number of times we’ve had to call Dell for support or maintenance on our data center systems”



Four years later, in early 2004, the Wyndham IT department once again was ready to refresh the company’s systems. As the Microsoft® Windows NT® Server operating system (OS) neared end of life, the IT team planned to migrate its PCs to Windows® XP Professional. At the same time, an increase in hardware horsepower was necessary to support newer, more powerful applications.

“We sent out a second RFP because our latest upgrade required a hardware vendor that could provide strong project management capabilities and deploy on a large scale to both national and international locations,” Miller says. “As in 2000, we also wanted low configuration, shipping, and deployment costs. Dell not only met all of our requirements, but also gave us a very competitive bid.”

Dell Professional Services deploys standard configurations

In May 2004, Dell Professional Services began replacing more than 2,000 PCs, upgrading an additional 1,000 PCs, and replacing about 150 servers at Wyndham properties as well as at its national sales offices and corporate headquarters. The project, which was scheduled for completion in August 2004, affected more than half of the company’s total hardware, which Miller estimates at 4,500 PCs and 450 servers.

The hotels now use a standard configuration—OptiPlex GX270 desktop systems and PowerEdge 2650 servers—to

support a variety of applications. These applications include a property management system for guest check-in and check-out; sales and catering systems; mail servers; file-and-print servers; and time-keeper systems.

In a separate installation, Wyndham increased overall storage capacity by installing several PowerVault 775 network attached storage (NAS) systems in the data center and in 14 hotels, as well as PowerVault external SCSI storage arrays in the data center.

Standard hardware model enables efficient project planning

Standardization on a single hardware platform and configuration has produced several IT efficiencies at Wyndham. The procurement process—enabled by the Dell direct build-to-order model and online Dell Premier Pages ordering system—is fast and supports the deployment of consistently configured systems. Wyndham also purchases Microsoft, Symantec, and VERITAS software through Dell, and Dell installs the software at the factory, saving time and helping keep costs predictable.

“Having a standardized hardware model and standardized pricing helps us when we implement new projects at Wyndham,” Miller says. “Our configurations and costs for Dell systems are well known and well documented now, so managers can plan efficiently for any type of project that involves new equipment.”

To date, Wyndham maintains 99.99 percent hardware availability using Dell systems

In addition to efficient and consistent deployment, Miller appreciates the reliability of Dell hardware. “I can count on one hand the number of times we’ve had to call Dell for support or maintenance on our data center systems,” he says.

This reliability is particularly important in the hotel industry, where customers make reservations at all hours of the night, both online and using internal reservation staff. “You never want someone to log on to your Web site or phone your reservation staff only to find that the server is down,” Miller says. “If you inconvenience potential customers, they may take their business elsewhere.”

Using performance reports from an application that captures system uptime since mid-2003, Miller has determined that Dell systems at Wyndham have averaged 99.99 percent availability. As added insurance for production systems that help generate revenue, Miller uses Dell Gold Technical Support with two-hour response time and Technical Account Manager (TAM) Services, which are teams of engineers who support a defined set of customers—although Miller states that these services are seldom needed.

“We’ve always had a mutually beneficial relationship with Dell,” Miller says. “They help us control costs and manage projects with quality products that meet our business requirements. By rolling configuration, software installation, and hardware deployment services into a single offering, Dell helps streamline our business processes—cutting costs and saving time, from ordering to implementation.” **D**