



## Virtual Desktops Deliver Five-Star Service at Oberoi Group Hotels

### INDUSTRY

Hospitality

### LOCATION

India

### KEY CHALLENGES

- Reduce IT operating costs while ensuring Oberoi Group hotel employees can continue providing high-quality services to guests and corporate clients
- Boost the effectiveness of IT delivery through centralized control and monitoring
- Improve the ROI and TCO of hotel-based IT infrastructures, and reduce administrative costs of desktop devices
- Reduce datacenter space requirements, lower carbon footprint and manage security policies more effectively

### SOLUTION

Implement VMware Horizon View and VMware vSphere with ESXi to deliver lower-cost, highly available datacenter and desktop services to Oberoi Group hotels.

### BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Reduced IT operating costs
- Extended desktop refresh cycle from five to eight years
- Delivered 100 percent system availability

The luxury hotel and tourism operator needed to improve returns on its technology assets. Implementing VMware Horizon View with VMware vSphere has reduced operating costs and enabled centralized control and maintenance of desktops and servers, while enabling employees to continue providing high-quality services to guests and corporate clients.

Founded in 1934, The Oberoi Group now has 13,000 employees and operates 31 hotels as well as luxury cruisers on the Nile in Egypt and the sea off Kerala in India.

The Group has a presence in six countries under the luxury Oberoi and five-star Trident Hotels brands. The Oberoi Group also operates flight catering, airport lounges, Avis car rentals in India, and a printing press.

### The Challenge

By 2010, The Oberoi Group had extended its business from largely building and owning hotels to include managing properties.

At that time, each Oberoi Group hotel was running core business applications on physical servers in dedicated server rooms. IT managers were present on site to monitor and maintain this environment, while hotel employees were working on traditional desktops connected to private networks.

However, the Group was starting to research ways to control its IT costs, reduce carbon emissions and secure data while continuing to deliver high-standard IT services. "As an IT team, we wanted to remain ahead of the curve and provide a better ROI for The Oberoi Group," said Ashish Khanna, Assistant Vice President Corporate IT, EIH Ltd (a member of The

Oberoi Group).

"The Oberoi Group Corporate IT department undertook an initiative to evaluate technologies that could centralize administration, reduce post-implementation operating expenses, and lower hotels' IT-related heating, lighting and other power costs."

This initiative had to comply with an Oberoi Group commitment to employ the best environmental and ecological practices across its technology, equipment and operations.

The new infrastructure also had to help maintain The Oberoi Group's excellent reputation. "Our employees cannot meet our customers' service expectations without support from our IT systems," said Khanna. "For example, if a guest wants to check out of one of our hotels, we can't keep them waiting because of system unavailability."

Maintaining high system availability is also crucial to The Oberoi Group's sales and marketing team. Salespeople from this team negotiate corporate deals with companies to help fill Oberoi Group hotel rooms throughout the year.



***“VMware Horizon View and VMware vSphere have improved our TCO by significantly extending the life span of client terminals in our hotels, and minimizing the carbon footprint of our datacenter and end-user computing environment.”***

Ashish Khanna,  
Assistant Vice President  
Corporate IT  
EIH Ltd

“For example, if a corporate customer wants to book 10,000 room-nights across our hotels over a year, our salesperson can give them a competitive rate, said Khanna. “However, if our business systems aren’t available during that negotiation, we risk our salesperson not being able to close that deal quickly and efficiently.”

### The Solution

The Oberoi Group’s IT team explored the market and was excited by how virtualization could improve the manageability and security of hotel desktops while delivering a scalable, cost-effective server infrastructure.

“The fact we were developing new infrastructures for these hotels gave us a tremendous opportunity to innovate,” said Khanna. “We wanted to implement technologies that could meet our current requirements and our future needs.”

The Oberoi Group then tested its critical guest-facing and back-office applications on a range of solutions. “VMware Horizon View™ and VMware vSphere® were more mature in functionality and performance than the alternatives,” said Khanna.

The Oberoi Group’s first move was to implement virtualization at three of its newest hotels: the Oberoi, Gurgaon in India, which opened in early 2011; the Oberoi, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, which opened in June 2013; and the Trident, Hyderabad in India, which opened in September 2013.

This involved implementing VMware vSphere with ESXi to run core business applications, and VMware Horizon View to deliver virtual desktops on thin-client terminals to back-office employees. Each desktop is hosted in the hotel’s server room and delivered as a managed service.

The Oberoi Group chose VMware’s largest partner in northern India, PC Solutions Pvt Ltd, to design, deploy, review and support the virtualized infrastructure for the two hotels in India. Each project was completed in about 60 days.

“We chose PC Solutions because they have a dedicated pool of VMware-certified engineers and consultants, and a strong record in end-user computing deployments,” said Khanna.

“The Oberoi, Gurgaon project was one of the first virtual desktop deployments

in the hospitality sector in India,” said Nalin Mallick, Senior Solution Architect, PC Solutions. “To ensure its success, we spent a lot of time and effort understanding The Oberoi Group’s needs and reflecting these in the solution design.”

Once The Oberoi Group approved the design, PC Solutions completed the deployment and trained the group’s IT team to manage the infrastructure. PC Solutions’ quality assurance team then reviewed the project before the system went live.

The Oberoi Group engaged CADD Emirates to deliver virtualization to the Oberoi, Dubai. “We started work in November 2012 and handed the virtualized infrastructure to the Oberoi, Dubai in February–March 2013 for a soft launch,” said Jimmy Joseph, Business Manager – Hospitality, Hostech, CADD Emirates. “We met all the project milestones and deadlines, and trained workers at the Oberoi, Dubai to run the environment.”

The Oberoi Group has asked CADD Emirates to provide ongoing support for its virtualized infrastructure for at least the next year.

### Business Results & Benefits

The virtualized desktop and server environment has delivered five-star benefits to The Oberoi Group’s Oberoi, Dubai; Oberoi, Gurgaon; and Trident, Hyderabad.

The hotels have not experienced any downtime since the project was completed, allowing employees to focus on guest services such as checkout and bill reconciliation, and completing corporate sales without being concerned about the availability of desktops and core IT systems.

Each user in the three hotels’ reception, housekeeping, reservations, food and beverages, sales and marketing, and accounts departments can access a virtual desktop customized to their specific needs from anywhere within their respective hotels.

By replacing traditional desktop computers with VMware-powered thin-client terminals, The Oberoi Group has extended its refresh cycle from five years to up to eight years.

## VMWARE CASE STUDY

***“Virtual desktops provide us with better flexibility and improved agility, enabling us to bring new users on board much faster.”***

Ashish Khanna  
Assistant Vice President  
Corporate IT  
EIH Ltd

### VMWARE FOOTPRINT

- VMware Horizon View
- VMware vSphere with ESXi

### APPLICATIONS VIRTUALIZED

- Microsoft Active Directory
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2007
- Trend Micro OfficeScan 10
- ISA proxy
- Microsoft Windows Update Services
- Oasis accounting system
- Call management and other business applications from Triton

### PLATFORM

- Wyse and VXL thin-client terminals
- IBM BladeCenter HS22V servers
- IBM BladeCenter HS23 servers
- IBM Storwize V3700 storage system
- Microsoft Windows 7 Professional
- 2x10 Gigabit Ethernet

### PARTNERS

PC Solutions for Trident, Hyderabad and Oberoi, Gurgaon, and CADD Emirates for Oberoi, Dubai

“Our users are not experiencing any disruption and can work the same way as they did previously,” said Khanna. “However, we have cut our administration and operational overheads, and reduced our carbon footprint.”

The thin-client terminals require only a 20-watt power supply, whereas standard desktop personal computers need a 200-watt power supply.

Decoupling user desktop environments from traditional personal computers also ensures that hardware failure is not a major concern. Malfunctioning machines can simply be sent for repair or recycled with no downtime, loss of staff productivity or drop in guest service standards.

Administrators can also provision new users with a desktop environment in minutes, rather than taking hours to set up a traditional desktop personal computer. In addition, because the desktops, applications and data reside in the hotel server rooms, The Oberoi Group IT team can easily install patches, deploy new applications and replace compromised desktops.

IT administrators can ensure that malware is not introduced to the hotel network, and can minimize the risk of sensitive data being lost or leaked.

The Oberoi Group has achieved all this while reducing IT operating costs at the three hotels compared to its other properties. Rather than replicate its traditional infrastructure of about 22 servers per hotel, The Oberoi Group is running just 12 servers in each of the three hotels. These servers are all partitioned into multiple virtual machines. This has enabled the Group to cut the real estate required to run hardware in each server room, and lower the strain on air conditioning and power supplies.

Overall, Khanna is delighted with the outcome and is preparing to move to the next stage of his plan to implement virtualization throughout the business. “Deploying virtualization has cemented our reputation as an innovator in the hospitality sector in India, and given us the ability to greatly improve our performance and efficiency in the long term,” he said.

