Ricacorp Properties Secures, Unifies and Centralizes its IT Mobility Project using AirWatch

INDUSTRY
Real Estate / Property Management

LOCATION
Hong Kong

KEY CHALLENGES

• Agents need ubiquitous electronic access to corporate resources since they are always on the move.

• Agents use a diversity of devices, which makes providing a unified solution that works on all devices difficult.

• Present security protocols are not robust enough to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive data.

• The in-house IT team's support services are strained, especially since agent turnover is high and devices keep having to be included and excluded from the system one at a time.

SOLUTION
Ricacorp Properties used VMware AirWatch to mobilize its IT services for 2,500 agents across 200 branches.

Ricacorp Properties Limited has focused on providing quality and professional estate agency services covering residential, commercial, industrial, and retail properties in Hong Kong. Founded in 1981, Ricacorp has more than 200 branches and 2,500 sales agents, making it one of the leading and most established property agents in the region.

The Mobilization of IT Services

In light of the mobile nature of the real estate industry, with sales agents being continuously on the move in order to sell or survey property, Ricacorp decided to mobilize its IT services. In particular, Ricacorp wanted its agents to access corporate resources electronically from any device, anywhere. It introduced a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) scheme, which allowed agents to access corporate resources using their own mobile devices whenever they wanted. Ricacorp aimed to increase productivity by enabling agents to interact with IT while on the move, while also improving employee satisfaction by allowing staff to use their own personal devices in the workplace.

The Challenges

Ricacorp encountered several challenges while attempting to mobilize its IT services. For instance, agents used a variety of different mobile brands, ranging from Apple to Samsung. This made supporting multiple operating systems difficult, and required a unified, cross-platform solution.

There was also a great deal of confidential information, such as sales data or customer details, which Ricacorp wanted agents to access electronically. However, there was a concern that present security protocols were not robust enough to prevent this data from being breached by unauthorized parties.

Last but not least, Ricacorp's in-house IT team had historically struggled to institute mobile IT services for 2,500 agents across 200 branches. The challenge was magnified by the large agent turn-over rate in the real estate industry, which meant that IT had to manually remove or add access to corporate resources on the mobile devices of every agent that left or joined the company. This was a process that consumed a lot of time and resource.

The Solution

In order to eliminate these issues, Ricacorp turned to VMware's AirWatch, which is an enterprise mobility management (EMM) platform that is secure and unified. AirWatch works across a range of different mobile devices and provides users simplified access to corporate resources or custom-made apps. AirWatch additionally delivers centralized IT management tools which can inspect all devices at once, circumventing the need to deal with each device individually. The secure, unified and centralized nature of AirWatch thus represented a step forward in implementing Ricacorp's mobile IT system. As

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>
> Mr. Dennis Tam,
> Associate Director of Ricacorp Properties

VMWARE FOOTPRINT
VMware AirWatch

Dennis Tam, Associate Director of Ricacorp explains, "AirWatch is a market-leading software that is able to meet all of our requirements."

Business Benefits

Several positive business outcomes emerged after Ricacorp started using AirWatch. For a start, the centralized IT self-service portal provided by AirWatch enabled Ricacorp's IT team to enable or disable the access of devices from a single page, rather than having to manually administer each device. The portal also enabled the team to upgrade any applications if needed, to access devices remotely, or to view detailed device information.

Dennis Tam emphasized the business benefit the company enjoys from this centralization, saying "The IT team can now work much more speedily and effectively than before, thereby saving significant time and cost from an operational level when dealing with issues related to the mobile IT platform."

In addition to IT management, sales agents have also been benefiting from the user experiences provided by AirWatch. Due to AirWatch's unified solution, agents can easily log into the system using any registered device and access corporate apps, resources, Wi-Fi, intranet services, emails and more with a single sign-on. The simplicity and ease-of-use AirWatch brings to the table across a variety of mobile devices makes agents more productive in the field, which helps promote the growth of Ricacorp's business.

Arguably the most important benefit provided by AirWatch is the platform's enhanced security features. Agents have their devices authenticated before they can access any Ricacorp service and confidential company information is transferred through a secure channel with a high level of encryption to prevent breaches from outside.

In addition to protecting company data, AirWatch protects the privacy of Ricacorp's agents. As Dennis Tam says, "With the help of AirWatch, our employees can have real-time access to our company database. They are also assured that all personal data from their mobile devices, such as GPS location, photos, contacts or text messages remains private." By helping prevent the breach of company or agent data, AirWatch benefits Ricacorp's business by ensuring that the company does not suffer a severe financial loss as a result of any potential leaks of sensitive information.

Looking Forward

In future, Ricacorp plans to broaden its horizons by introducing better customer services and solutions. A better customer experience requires the company to provide flexible models for asset management and policy enforcement. But it also requires a world-class mobile IT infrastructure that provides employees with resources, apps and content to help customers. Hence Ricacorp is considering extending the application of AirWatch to more service areas and even regions, such as Macau. Dennis Tam anticipates that "the relationship between Ricacorp and AirWatch will only deepen" as time goes forward.

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