CHOICE HOTELS
I N T E R N A T I O N A L ®

Choice Hotels Slashes IT Provisioning Times and Improves Performance with VMware vRealize Suite

Choice Hotels was too slow in providing infrastructure resources to its application developers and couldn't resolve performance issues quickly. With the VMware vRealize™ Suite cloud management platform, the firm has slashed provisioning cycles from weeks to minutes and reduced costs by resolving performance issues before they cause downtime.

Choice Hotels International is one of the world's largest and most successful lodging companies. The firm currently franchises more than 6,300 hotels in more than 35 countries and territories, representing more than 500,000 rooms. Choice brands include Comfort Inn, Comfort Suites, Quality Inn, Sleep Inn, Clarion, Cambria Hotel & Suites, MainStay Suites, Suburban Extended Stay Hotel, Econo Lodge, Rodeway Inn, and Ascend Hotel Collection.

The Challenge

Choice Hotels recently migrated its corporate data center to a VMware software-defined data center architecture. That facility is now about 80 percent virtualized with approximately 1,600 virtual machines supporting the organization's production and development environments. With the migration complete, it became obvious that some additional management tools were required to support the organization's development effort.

"We had some challenges delivering infrastructure to our development teams," says senior virtualization engineer Ross Davis. "We have about 200 developers writing applications that are used by our customers, our employees, and our franchisees. It was taking us between four and six weeks to stand up the infrastructure for a new application and release it to the development team. We needed to shrink that time to help the business get new applications to market more quickly."

A key source of delay was the time required to correlate and resolve performance issues across the compute, storage, and network stacks. "We needed a better tool to really get in there and troubleshoot and resolve those types of issues," adds Joey Coco, also a senior virtualization engineer with Choice Hotels.

The Solution

To address these challenges, the Choice Hotels team chose VMware vRealize Suite based on its native integration with the VMware software-defined data center environment. VMware vRealize Automation™ technology streamlines the resource provisioning process, while VMware vRealize Operations™ technology provides guided remediation and faster resolution of critical issues.

VMware vRealize Suite, which is a cloud management platform built for the hybrid cloud, quickly delivers and manages infrastructure and applications while maintaining granular IT control. It provides a comprehensive management stack for IT services on VMware vSphere® software and other hypervisors, physical infrastructure, and public clouds such as the VMware vCloud® Air™ environment and Amazon Web Services, all with a unified management experience.

INDUSTRY
Travel/Leisure

LOCATION
Rockville, Maryland

KEY CHALLENGES
• Long fulfillment cycles for application infrastructure provisioning

• Difficulty troubleshooting performance issues across compute, storage, and network infrastructure

• High downtime costs

SOLUTION
Choice Hotels leveraged the VMware vRealize Suite cloud management platform to automate infrastructure provisioning to its application developers, accelerate performance troubleshooting, and slash delivery times for new business applications.

BUSINESS BENEFITS
• Slashed application infrastructure provisioning from six weeks to 30 minutes

• Accelerated the delivery of new management applications to business users

• Achieved superior performance with accelerated root cause analysis and guided remediation

• Reclaimed more than 100 overprovisioned virtual machines in the first few weeks, more than 6 percent of the virtual machines typically running in the Choice Hotels production environment

• Reduced downtime costs

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> *"Now we can stand up an application middleware stack in less than 30 minutes. That takes the infrastructure team out of the loop, so the development teams no longer see us as a roadblock."*

Ross Davis
Senior Virtualization Engineer,
Choice Hotels

VMWARE FOOTPRINT
- VMware vRealize Suite
- VMware vRealize Automation with vRealize Orchestrator
- VMware vRealize Operations

"We chose vRealize Suite because it is deeply integrated into our existing VMware environment," says Davis. "We can leverage it to manage new application stacks as we stand them up, as well as the existing infrastructure already deployed. We also have a very good relationship with VMware. We have a lot of faith in what they have already delivered, and we want to build on that partnership."

The Choice Hotels team handled installation and deployment themselves, taking three weeks from initial build to integrate vRealize Suite with key third-party systems such as Infoblox and Red Hat Satellite Server. All integration was accomplished using custom workflows written in the VMware vRealize Orchestrator™ orchestration engine within the vRealize Automation environment.

Business Benefits

With vRealize Suite, the Choice Hotels team has cut its response time for development resource requests significantly. By leveraging the self-service catalog in the vRealize Automation environment, the infrastructure team has enabled the development team to make their resource requests directly, and the provisioning process is now fully automated. "It used to take us weeks, but we can stand up an application middleware stack in less than 30 minutes," Davis says. "That takes the infrastructure team out of the loop, so the development teams no longer see us as a roadblock."

The team has also slashed troubleshooting time thanks to vRealize Operations technology. "We're now able to get to root cause far more quickly than we have with other monitoring tools. We were never able to correlate statistics from one group to another," Coco explains. "We've been able to find problems before they've caused downtime in our environments, which has significantly improved the relationship between developers and IT."

An unexpected benefit is the recovery of resources that were overprovisioned in previous projects. "The right-sizing feature was a very pleasant surprise," Davis says. "In just the first couple of weeks after deploying the tool, we were able to get back more than 100 virtual machines with vRealize Automation. That's more than 6 percent of the virtual machines that are typically running in our production environment. That has saved money by avoiding additional hardware purchases."

But the most important impact of VMware vRealize Suite is certainly faster delivery of new management applications to the business. Integrated management of the cloud infrastructure is enabling Choice Hotels to become agile, cost-efficient, and competitive.

Looking Ahead

With VMware vRealize Suite in place, the next task for Choice Hotels is building custom performance dashboards for key application and infrastructure teams. "We'll have one for the Linux team, one for the Windows team, one for WebLogic," says Coco. "Each group will be able to monitor their own applications and manage their own performance."

Choice Hotels also plans further expansion of its private cloud to support capacity growth and extend self-service provisioning all the way to its end users. Other areas under investigation include storage virtualization with VMware Virtual SAN™ technology, and network virtualization with VMware NSX™ technology.

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