



World leading car rental company uses VMware View to simplify infrastructure and improve user experience

INDUSTRY

Vehicle hire

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS

Park Ridge, New Jersey, U.S.

EMPLOYEES

29,000+

ANNUAL REVENUE

\$8.2 billion

WEBSITE

www.hertz.com

“By virtualizing our server and desktop estate with VMware, we’ve cut costs, dramatically simplified our IT infrastructure and transformed how we support over 1000 desktops in our service centre in Dublin. We’re able to create and deliver even more innovative technology services to our users, while enhancing the experience we provide to our customers. The platform VMware has enabled us to build has given us extremely strong foundations to realise even greater benefits, as we add more and more services and extend the research of the programme internationally.”

Paul Bermingham, Staff Vice President, Information Technology Services, Hertz International

Hertz is a world renowned vehicle renting company, operating approximately 8,700 locations in 150 countries.

It runs a European Shared Services Centre with 950 staff in Dublin, Ireland that manages business functions including reservations, customer care, finance, HR, insurance and an International IT Innovation Centre. The Dublin centre provides shared services to countries across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. It also offers support to Hertz locations and franchises across Australasia, including China, Australia and New Zealand.

“Due to the nature of our business, the operational infrastructure is highly complex and dispersed. This puts a lot of pressure on our IT system and our ability to keep spiraling IT costs under control while offering employees the technology services they require to do their jobs well,” says Paul Bermingham, Staff Vice President, Information Technology Services, Hertz International.

To improve operational efficiencies, Hertz International had a choice of either refreshing its existing infrastructure across its European locations at considerable expense, or implementing newer technologies. The department was tasked to find a way to reduce the IT footprint and simplify the infrastructure while at the same time meeting the expectations of both staff and customers. Key objectives were to reduce IT support costs, improve Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance and security systems, achieve ISO 18001 compliance and associated power savings, simplify infrastructure management and improve user experience.

VMware helps simplify server and desktop environment

“We started with a server virtualization project with the end goal of hosting all virtual servers for the entire European region centrally from Dublin. We chose VMware vSphere due to its market leading offering, feature-richness and competitive pricing and product maturity and are progressing well with this side

of our IT transformation,” explains Bermingham.

In addition to centralising the server estate, Hertz International wanted to simplify its complex desktop infrastructure, which constituted a considerable capital investment. “We have over 4,000 PCs and laptops spread over 1,000 sites around Europe. Upkeep and maintenance of these are a real issue in terms of time, resource and cost; if a desktop breaks, a new device has to be sent out as well as an engineer to install all the necessary applications to the new terminal. Due to the dispersed nature of our business, the expense of this framework has become unsustainable and we decided the only way forward was to virtualize our desktop infrastructure.”

Following a review of the major offerings on the market, Hertz International decided to implement VMware View as it best suited the organisation’s needs and would easily integrate with its existing server virtualization infrastructure. It also made a decision to replace legacy desktop devices with zero client Wyse terminals. Throughout the planning stages, Hertz received support from VMware’s Professional Services Organisation (PSO), which assisted with the technical aspects of the project and worked with the team on the ground to ensure Hertz was getting the most out of the technology.

The IT team decided to take a phased approach to the virtual desktop

VMWARE CASE STUDY

THE NUMBERS

- 1,000 virtual desktops and another 3,000 in the pipeline, across Hertz Europe's locations.
- 33% cut in helpdesk calls
- 10% cut in electricity costs

OBJECTIVE

To simplify and cut costs of the desktop infrastructure across the Hertz Europe Shared Services Centre in Dublin as well as 4000 desktops across Europe

SOLUTION

Implemented VMware View to improve PCI compliance and security as well as reducing costs and simplifying the technical infrastructure.

BUSINESS IMPACT

- Transformed how Hertz supports its Service Centre in Dublin
- Improved PCI compliance and security
- Considerably simplified IT infrastructure
- Improved flexibility and ability to handle seasonal/regional peaks of activity
- Improved the end user IT experience for staff across Europe
- Centralised support

“VDI enables us to be far more flexible. Some of our locations have seasonal rental peaks, such as leisure destinations in Spain, Italy and the south of France. During this time it is far easier to increase capacity with the use of virtual desktop computing.”

Paul Bermingham, Staff Vice President, Information Technology Services, Hertz International

infrastructure (VDI) implementation across the region: “We started by virtualizing the 1,000 desktops in our European Shared Services centre in Dublin and are now in the process of running pilot programmes in a number of locations across the UK, Italy, France and Germany, including busy airport rental services at Heathrow and Frankfurt airports. The next phase will be to virtualize 4000 desktops across our car rental locations in Europe,” explains Bermingham.

“While this started off as a European project, the wider international Hertz network and franchisees have become interested in rolling out VDI as well and we are currently looking into how we can extend it to countries including China, Australia and New Zealand,” continues Bermingham. “It is great to see something we developed in our Dublin Innovation Centre recognised as having the potential to be rolled out across the globe.”

Hertz cuts costs and improves compliance with VMware View

One of the key reasons for Hertz to move to a virtual desktop infrastructure was to improve PCI compliance and security of the system. As opposed to visiting each physical desktop, the IT team is now able to patch the servers in Dublin instead, thus realising substantial savings. In addition, as no data is kept on thin clients and everything is held centrally in the data centre in Dublin, security risks are considerably reduced. “PCI considerations were a key driver for us and VDI makes it easier to run anti-virus patches and keep security up-to-date. Upgrading and rolling-out software packages have also become far simpler as we do not have to visit each and every laptop individually. So far we have also virtualized over 300 desktop applications through VMware ThinApp, which has helped us standardise the application build and improved application speeds.”

The team's aim is to transform IT from a problem fixer to a business enabler, with virtualization greatly assisting in this development: “Once all software and systems are managed centrally, we will need fewer people on the ground resolving desktop issues and instead

allow the IT staff's focus to be on more innovative roles to achieve our goal of making Hertz a leader in technology and customer service. If a thin client is broken or an additional seat is required, we will be able to courier a new device out within a day. Once plugged in, the user will have instant access to the latest software and applications without needing the assistance of an engineer,” adds Bermingham. “What is more, once countries including Australia and New Zealand are integrated and we are all working from the same network, we will be able to offer helpdesk support around the clock by making use of employees in different time-zones.”

The new VDI infrastructure has already realised substantial cost savings, which are expected to multiply once the project is fully rolled-out across EMEA. “We have already reduced 33 percent of helpdesk incidents and cut the electricity requirements for our Dublin facility by 10 percent in addition to having become ISO18001 compliant. We are also expecting to save on hardware investment in the future by extending desktop lifecycles from three to five years to up to 10 years with the use of thin clients. We have realised how virtualization can substantially improve and simplify disaster recovery, especially if you are running an organisation across multiple locations. DR management is hugely simplified, outage time is minimised and resilience increased.”

Travelling at the speed of Hertz

Hertz is pushing full steam ahead with its VDI implementation across Europe and beyond. The new system is likely to change the way the organisation and its employees work. “There are so many possibilities as to how VDI can, and is, changing the way we work. For example, employees will be able to work more flexibly and, for the many business travelers in our organisation, carrying a heavy laptop may soon become unnecessary. All they may need in the near future is a light tablet computer to use during their travels, but once they arrive in any Hertz office they will be able to log into any thin client desktop and immediately have access to their own individual settings. VDI makes all that possible.”

VMWARE CASE STUDY

VMWARE PRODUCTS

- VMware vSphere
- VMware vCenter SRM
- VMware View
- VMware ThinApp

PARTNER

- HiberniaEvros

APPLICATIONS

- MS Office
- Windows 7
- Lotus Notes

PLATFORM

- Cisco UCS and Nexus switching

"We are also looking to push the technology further, possibly adding video and voice through the system," explains Bermingham. "We want to ensure that we not only simplify our infrastructure and cut costs, but also provide the best user experience - employee or customer - through technological innovation. This is only the start for us; we are already at the planning stages of rolling the system out internationally."

Hertz established an Innovation Centre in Dublin to drive excellence and innovation. It is a space where IT staff can break out from their day to day work and come together to develop the technologies that will transform and support the way Hertz deals with its customers - from new self-service terminals and booking innovations, to the virtualization project described in this case study.

