

Orange Lake Resorts

Windows XP Migration Time Reduced by 66 Percent, More Helpdesk Tickets Resolved on First Call



Orange Lake Resort has been experiencing tremendous growth, and along with that growth come new challenges particularly for the IT Department. To keep up with the growth Orange Lake needed a solution that would automate imaging, inventory, and help desk processes. It turned to a number of Altiris solutions by Symantec. As a result imaging times were reduced, inventory processes were automated, and help desk resolution rates were improved.

ALTIRIS: What were your company's top three IT challenges that led you to look for a solution such as Altiris?

SHAWN WATTERS, NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR: Help desk, imaging and asset tracking. Our help desk was the leading issue because we have about 2,300 employees spread among three states, and we were operating a manual help desk. Basically, users would call or email us about a problem. Then we would set up a task within Microsoft Outlook that became the ticket and assign the ticket to a technician.

We had no centralized way to track tickets so many got lost in the queue and encountered other problems associated with trying to manage the system by hand. Another big issue is that the technician handling each ticket had to spend a lot of extra time simply researching the PC's configuration, past problems and other pertinent data that would help resolve the ticket.

ALTIRIS: What were the primary challenges you were having with imaging?

SHAWN: We were using a competitor's product and because we had grown so much it was no longer meeting our needs. We couldn't image more than 10 PCs at a time because it was so bandwidth intensive. Some software packages worked after being installed but some didn't so we always had to do manual follow up, and the tool would not work on all operating systems. We never knew how clean the install and the image would be, so we ended up touching the PCs a lot and doing much of the imaging manually, which was very time consuming and resource intensive.

ALTIRIS: Why did you choose Altiris to address these challenges?

SHAWN: Altiris has more features and functions than other vendors we researched. And the seamless integration of all the products means that Altiris is significantly easier for us to learn and manage. We also liked the support we received both from Altiris and its partner, Advanced Marketplace.

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Network Administrator
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ORGANIZATION PROFILE

The Family of Orange Lake Resorts has evolved from the world's largest single-site timeshare resort to a multi-site resort with a growing network. New resort additions in Wisconsin, Vermont and Florida were carefully selected and tailored for their owners, resulting in the creation of a new member exchange program, Global Access™, to facilitate reservations within the resort network. The company plans to continue the expansion of its resort network and is actively seeking more growth opportunities to continue being the “home-away-from-home” to more than 110,000 owners from all 50 states and more than 120 countries. (www.orangelake.com).

INDUSTRY

Hospitality

SOLUTION

Endpoint Management

ALTIRIS: Have you implemented Altiris Helpdesk Solution? If so, how has it helped solve the problems you mentioned earlier?

SHAWN: Yes we have implemented Altiris Helpdesk Solution. Now everything is automated, and we are resolving many tickets on the first call. We have handled over 34,000 tickets since implementing Helpdesk, and we have done it in less time and much more efficiently than before. We have happier users as a result.

ALTIRIS: Which features in Helpdesk Solution do you use most?

SHAWN: The notification rules save us hundreds if not thousands of technician hours a year because they allow us to automate so many functions. For example, we configured Helpdesk Solution to send users the information they need to track their own tickets so we don't have to keep sending updates.

Ticket changes are automatically added to the history of each ticket and software requests automatically generate emails to get proper approval. The bottom line is that we now have a smooth, logical, super-efficient workflow in place that will allow us to expand the help desk as the company grows, without increasing technician hours.

ALTIRIS: Have you been able to quantify time-savings or other benefits from using Helpdesk Solution?

SHAWN: With Helpdesk Solution, our technicians resolve tickets three to four times faster than with our old manual system. That's a 300 to 400 percent increase in speed. When you multiply the time we save by the thousands of tickets we handle each year that adds up to thousands of technician hours that we can spend on other tasks.

ALTIRIS: What role has Advanced Marketplace played in your success?

SHAWN: They shortened our learning curve with Altiris and saved us a lot of headaches and time by helping us design the processes and methodologies that allow us to use Altiris efficiently. Advanced Marketplace brought a lot of practical experience to the table.

We benefited from their real-life field experience implementing Altiris for other clients. Whenever we have a question, they have the answer. And they always give us honest answers, even when it's not what we want to hear. That builds a lot of trust and respect. They helped us to implement Altiris and to put a plan in place so we get the most benefit from the solutions. It's a plan that we can build on as we grow.

ALTIRIS: Would you recommend Advanced Marketplace to other companies?

SHAWN: Unconditionally. We have established a solid relationship with them.

ALTIRIS: What other benefits have you received from using Altiris products?

SHAWN: Altiris Client Management Suite automated our imaging and deployment process, which reduced the time it takes to install an image by 50 percent. Better still, it eliminated travel time. We now remotely image PCs over the network without ever leaving the office.

Client Management Suite works on all of our operating systems, allows us to install software without having the user log off, is very easy to use and manage and was instrumental in our migration from Windows 2000 to XP. The savings in time and money is significant.

ALTIRIS: What role did Altiris play in your migration from Windows 2000 to XP?

SHAWN: It was indispensable. We could not have done the migration without Altiris. Besides migrating to XP, we were also updating our 1,020 PCs to Microsoft Office 2003 and installing some other new software. It was a huge task. But, Altiris simplified every step of the process. We set up one job to capture the personality of each PC, a second one to push the image with Windows XP and the new software, and another one to reinstall the personalities. It went like clockwork.

ALTIRIS: How long did it take to complete the migration?

SHAWN: We finished our migration to Windows XP in one-third the time it would have taken before, and with one-third the

SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

Business Drivers

- Automating the help desk to speed resolution of tickets
- Replacing manual imaging process with automated system
- Tracking assets in real time and reducing licensing costs
- Reducing training costs by running multiple versions of same software

Business Results

- Help desk ticket resolution rate increased by up to 400 percent, many of which are resolved on the first call.
- PC imaging and deployment process automated, reducing imaging time by 50 percent
- Time and resources needed to migrate to Windows XP reduced by 66 percent.
- Asset inventory and tracking system automated, providing asset information in real-time
- Software conflicts in training environment eliminated.

Symantec Products

Altiris® Helpdesk Solution™
 Altiris® Client Management Suite™
 Altiris® Asset Management Solution™
 Altiris® Barcode Solution™
 Altiris® Software Virtualization Solution™
 Professional

Technology Environment

Number of Users: 900 desktops; 120 laptops
 Number of Servers: 130
 Hardware: Hewlett-Packard
 Operating Systems: Windows XP for PCs; Windows 2003 and Linux for servers

amount of staff. That's a 66 percent reduction in time and resources. And to tell the truth, those numbers are really much lower in the sense that we only performed migrations two nights a week until the project was done, and the technicians only spent a fraction of their time actually working on the migration. Once they set up the deployment process on the Altiris console, they could multi-task and do other jobs while the migration took place automatically over the wire.

ALTIRIS: Are you using Altiris Asset Management Solution?

SHAWN: Yes. We're using it to inventory and track our PCs, licenses and contracts. We are also using Altiris Barcode Solution in conjunction with Asset Management as a checks and balances system. By putting a barcode on our PCs, we can do a physical inventory periodically to ensure that what we have on the books matches what we actually have in the field.

We had asset tags before, but the system consisted of a database that needed to be manually updated, which did not happen. So no one ever knew exactly what we had. The seamless integration of these Altiris solutions is key to giving us accurate, real-time inventory automatically.

ALTIRIS: How does Altiris Asset Management Solution help you track licenses and contracts?

SHAWN: It's the perfect solution to fix a real problem we had. Our previous license and contract "system" consisted of a file cabinet. Keeping track of each contract and determining which licenses were active and which were not was impossible. Paying for licenses that are not being used is a huge waste of money. Using Altiris, we scan all of the paperwork into the system as PDF files.

Now we can pull up contract numbers—any type of information—in a matter of seconds. If a department asks for more software licenses, we can check Altiris. If

we have unused licenses sitting out there, we can harvest and reuse them. If we don't have any to harvest, we can purchase new licenses with confidence, knowing we are not wasting money. Altiris Asset Management has put us back in control of our licensing and ensures we do not spend a dime more than we have to.

ALTIRIS: I understand you are also in the process of implementing Altiris Software Virtualization Solution (SVS) Professional. What problems will SVS solve for you?

SHAWN: It will allow us to run multiple versions of the same software, which is normally impossible to do. For example, we have Microsoft Access 97, 2000 and 2003 databases on our system. SVS allows us to simultaneously run the three different versions of Access on separate layers without DLL or any other conflicts. Without SVS, we would have to set up the Access versions on separate PCs and every time employees wanted to access a database besides Access 2003, they would have to go to these special PCs. It would not be convenient to say the least.

ALTIRIS: What other benefits do you anticipate by using SVS?

SHAWN: It will make all the difference in our training environment. Our company is growing, so we are constantly training new employees on software as well as updating the skills of our existing 2,300 employees. With SVS, we can load software on our training PCs and turn the different applications on and off by simply activating and deactivating the different layers. It takes a matter of seconds. If we encounter a problem with a piece of software, we simply reactivate and reset it. That's really impressive because your average training facility is continuously installing and uninstalling software, which is not only time consuming but makes them unstable. As a result, they have to be reimaged more often.

ALTIRIS: Has your staff received any Altiris training?

SHAWN: Yes. Advanced Marketplace trained us on Helpdesk and Client Management Suite. It was very thorough and cost effective. The training shortened the learning curve and allowed us to make the best use of the products immediately.

ALTIRIS: What is your opinion of Symantec's acquisition of Altiris?

SHAWN: So far, I'm impressed. I haven't noticed any difference. Our support has been excellent before and after the acquisition.

ALTIRIS: What advice would you give to IT managers who face the same challenges you did?

SHAWN: I would tell them to give a good, close look at Altiris. It has really opened my eyes to the type of control you can have over your infrastructure. I'm constantly impressed by what we can do with the different solutions, and can't begin to quantify the time and money we save with Altiris.

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