DYNAMIC STRATEGIES

Case Study

How this IT Service
Provider Consistently
Exceeds Client Expectations

The Client

In business since 2000, the client was the
first, and is currently the largest, provider of
hospitality retail services, representing more
than 2,900 properties, over 6,000 hotels with
approximately 1.2 million rooms. Their business
offering involves the development and hosting
of eCommerce websites for hotel brands. The
company currently has 60 servers, over 70
end users and around 85 active Web stores.
They act as the fulfillment arm and provide an
online channel for the sale of all items that can
be found in a hotel room such as beds, linen,

bathroom accessories, luggage, lounge chairs, lamps and various home décor items. They currently serve clients in the United States, Canada and Europe. And, as a testament to their success, growth and leadership position, they are currently expanding into the Asia-Pacific market.

The Search for a Dependable Service Provider

The client's current Director of Technology, who joined the company in 2009, oversees technology, application development and the technical architecture of the infrastructure. The managed services vendor working with the client in 2009 was very small and, as a result of insufficient staffing, performed services essentially on an as-needed basis with very little proactive planning. The engagement also lacked organization. And, since all IT functions were outsourced back then, tremendous inefficiencies existed. When the director came on board, she took immediate advantage of the opportunities available to make significant improvements.

At the top of the list was the decision to overhaul the company's IT architecture and bring more functions in house for better control. Only IT operations were to be outsourced moving forward, so next on the list was to start the search for a vendor better suited to the growing needs of the company.

The company started the search using a scorecard that included the most critical factors that would need immediate attention. This cut the candidate list in half, to a short list of three vendors, who had similar technical skills.

Dynamic Strategies was referred to this client through the datacenter at which both companieshad co-

location operations. On the basis of the RFP submitted and their sales presentation, Dynamic Strategies appeared to be better equipped to deliver the flexibility required to meet the needs of the fastpaced company. The management team at Dynamic Strategies also came across as "down to earth people" who would work well within the client's workplace culture.

The Director visited Dynamic Strategies' facilities, got a good look at their current client list and was able to talk to four of those clients who provided excellent feedback on their experiences with Dynamic Strategies. As the Director stated, "Even though Dynamic Strategies

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wasn't the top scorer on our scorecard, sometimes you just have to go with your gut and instincts." At the end of the three month evaluation process, Dynamic Strategies was selected.

The Initial Focus of the Engagement

Dynamic Strategies immediately implemented an eight-week discovery process, with an objective to determine a current status of what was working and what was not working. With the myriad of problems disclosed during this discovery, Dynamic Strategies determined that the most prudent use of the first six months of the engagement would be to focus exclusively on correcting these priority issues.

The Path to Best Practices

It was noted that the company needed a better solution for licensing of its hardware and software. They quickly

moved from an adhoc/reactive licensing process to a planned process with centralized control of all software licenses, support contracts and hardware warranties, correcting gaps where needed.

As an eCommerce company, the client has Payment Card Industry (PCI) security requirements they have to satisfy. The company had an ongoing, yet difficult to manage process in place. With these goals in mind, and to ensure continued PCI compliance, Dynamic Strategies initiated a process to make network security and management as simple as possible. They applied additional security measures that included changes to firewalls and implementation of more stringent security measures on their Internet presence. Other processes – backups, password resets, email rules for inbox limitations – were completely revamped.

New Levels of Organization and Control

Dynamic Strategies managed to reorganize and redesign the client's architecture in a way that would ensure secure, robust and scalable Websites that would enable the company to grow well into the next decade. This was a critical improvement that complemented the company's near-term plans to expand into Asia-Pacific, and later into other global markets.

According to the Director of Technology, the company has not had any security issues, "Dynamic Strategies has been instrumental in implementing the best of the best in terms of security standards without breaking the bank."

Next, Dynamic Strategies worked with the client to fully implement a change control process which the

Director of Technology put into place with the previous managed services vendor. However, according to the client, "The previous vendor did not want to adhere to the change control processes and resented the idea of having to submit an approval request for changes to our production environment, or to comply with documenting the changes. With Dynamic Strategies, this was easily achieved and a simple but effective process has been in place ever since."

Fast Forward Three Years

The company is in a growth phase. This year, realimprovement projects will be implemented such as database mutual redundancy, automatic failover capability and enhancements to the network to achieve fault tolerance at all points. To accomplish these ambitious goals, the company has elevated the role of Dynamic Strategies from an emergency support line vendor to a true partner with involvement in every project requiring a technology solution.

Evidence that Dynamic Strategies earned this role is summed up by the Director of Technology, "We can really count on Dynamic Strategies even if it goes beyond the SLA's of our contract. They go the extra mile and sort out any contractual details only after the emergency has passed."

Because the company's call centers are located in the U.S. as well as in France, flexibility and availability of support team is extremely important. "With 60 servers online, it is really valuable to me that I can count on Dynamic Strategies' engineering support when I need it, no matter what time zone is involved", according to the director.

Dynamic Strategies also supports the client's end users, who dial directly into the vendor's help desk. With call centers across two time zones, and users spread throughout three countries, the client has an efficient help desk process across the board, allowing users to report and get attention to issues on anything, regardless whether Dynamic Strategies owns the resolution or not. Dynamic Strategies' support has grown to a point where they are effectively acting as liaison between the client and other technology providers, such as hardware, communications, and services vendors. Dynamic Strategies has full capability of remotely solving whatever issues end users may be facing. This role has eliminated the need for support staff and has helped the client save a substantial amount of money.

Recently, Dynamic Strategies has helped the company to take significant steps towards reducing their hardware footprint and cost of ownership, deploying a better virtualized solution for mission critical servers. The scope of the project involved development of the project proposal, equipment purchase and implementation, and working with the company's database and Web vendors to integrate everything.

The Ultimate Deliverable -Peace of Mind

Dynamic Strategies not only provides excellent resources for their clients, they exhibit a consistent willingness to provide service levels that meet the needs of the challenge, even when they exceed contractual SLA's. The Director of Technology described the ultimate result of this attribute, "I went from not being able to sleep without having my phone next to

me - not knowing what might break and who would take care of that - to being able to know that if I am unreachable, Dynamic Strategies is taking care of solving any IT need the company has, even if I'm not around."

While the client outsources to at least eight other vendors in areas of application development, and data and application support, the director stated that "..Dynamic Strategies is my best one. I think hiring them has been one of the best decisions we have made. I don't think that anything we have accomplished over the last 3 years would have been possible without their help."

Regardless of the size or scope of the engagement, Dynamic Strategies always employs a simple tactic that enables them to consistently exceed their clients' expectations – as in this case. By considering contractual SLAs as minimum obligations, they make it a regular practice to go above and beyond to bring projects online, on time and on budget.

About Dynamic Strategies

Dynamic Strategies is a privately held Information Technology Support Provider specializing in servicing clients which are headquartered primarily in the New Jersey, New York City, and Philadelphia regions and have one or more satellite locations across the country. Having long-term client partnerships dating from our founding in 1997, our approach has consistently proven to reduce operational costs while increasing end-user satisfaction. Dynamic Strategies brings value to our partners through superior levels of knowledge, flexibility, interface, and accountability.

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