



CUSTOMER STORY

With twenty-one unique four-star hotels in the UK, QHotels offer stays in both countryside retreats and at the heart of the city. With over 2,900 bedrooms across the UK, QHotels have been awarded the 'Gold Standard' & 'No. 1 Large Group' awards by VenueVerdict as well as achieving 'Which? Hotel Chain of the year' and Green Tourism Accreditation.

THE CHALLENGE

QHotels had invested £600,000 of CAPEX at their Data Center, including an upgrade of their Citrix environment to XenApp 6.5. In order to reap the rewards of this investment, they needed a hardware agnostic desktop solution that allowed for streamlining of their application delivery across multiple PC platforms. The solution had to solve issues surrounding the day-to-day management, visibility, and future replacement of desktop devices company-wide, while providing a mirrored experience throughout.

David Kelly, IT Director at QHotels said, “Along with three Engineers, I manage the IT systems throughout QHotels which comprises of 470 desktops across 22 sites. Throughout the company we cater for over eight hundred staff and have traditionally used the Citrix ICA client to provide them access to our remote applications on PC’s running various Windows versions. Following our Data Center investment, we decided to look for a desktop solution that would allow us to take full advantage of our new XenApp environment.”

QHotels had never been brand loyal when it came to purchasing desktop PC’s and had accumulated a wide range of models. Kelly explained, “We have always purchased based on price as the PC’s have traditionally only needed to connect to the ICA client. I would say that we have around thirty to forty different models of PC’s across QHotels, running different versions of Windows. The biggest problem with this set up was that apart from VNC, we had no remote visibility of our desktops and our Engineers would sometimes travel two hundred miles just to stick a CD in and build a PC. Site visits like these weren’t economical when you took into account the time and money spent achieving them. It was a huge factor in our decision to look at a new desktop solution.

“Although PC’s were causing an issue for us in terms of maintenance, there just wasn’t budget there to replace all of them in one go. Besides, some were well within their warranty period and would have been uneconomical to replace them. The new desktop device solution had to support our range of PC hardware and also address our need for remote visibility. In addition to the immediate requirements we also needed a solution which would allow for a seamless transition away from dead or out of warranty PC’s to a more efficient desktop device.”

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THE SOLUTION

QHotels implemented 10ZiG's NoTouch PC repurposing tool to allow for centralized management and visibility of their repurposed desktops. They also implemented 10ZiG Linux and Windows Thin Clients as replacements for PC's, which had reached the end of their lifecycle. The 10ZiG devices are now used as a company standard desktop device for replacing dead or out of warranty PC's.

"We tested 10ZiG devices alongside IGEL, and 10ZiG came out on top based on a mixture of product and service. The solution they offered, starting with PC re-purposing and through to true Thin Clients was just a better fit overall. In addition, they were the only vendor willing to develop a customized re-purposing image for our wide range of PC hardware. Overall we found that 10ZiG were approachable, reliable and gave that extra personal touch that made them the right choice for us. 10ZiG's close attention to the issues we were trying to overcome was a big factor in our decision to choose them," Kelly said.

"10ZiG [has] covered all the bases in terms of our needs and the long term plan is to phase out all of the remaining PC's with 10ZiG Thin Clients when they reach the end of their lifecycle. It is now a company standard to replace desktops with a 10ZiG Thin Client."

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Kelly added, "We currently have 308 10ZiG re-purposed desktops, 120 or so 10ZiG Linux Thin Clients, and around 30 10ZiG Windows Embedded 7 Thin Clients. Aside from the re-purposed machines, we will continue to utilize the Linux Thin Clients as our mainstream desktop device. The WES 7 units are used at our reception desks where support is required for key card encoder software, and also at our Leisure Clubs, which utilize a database application which has a requirement to run locally. Our users don't acknowledge that they are using a Thin Client or a re-purposed PC because the experience is the same throughout. This uniformity is important for us and mirrors our mission to providing a tailored QHotels experience at each of our 21 hotels.

"He continued, "10ZiG [has] covered all the bases in terms of our needs and the long term plan is to phase out all of the remaining PC's with 10ZiG Thin Clients when they reach the end of their lifecycle. It is now a company standard to replace desktops with a 10ZiG Thin Client."



THE BENEFITS

By implementing 10ZiG's cross platform re-purposing solution, NoTouch, QHotels can now oversee their desktops remotely. In addition, their implementation of 10ZiG Thin Clients has given them a true future-proofed solution which allows them to move away from desktop PC's to more agile, manageable, and secure desktop hardware.

Kelly listed some of the benefits that QHotels have seen since purchasing 10ZiG hardware and software, "Out of all the benefits we have seen from implementing the 10ZiG solution, the visibility we have achieved over our desktops has made the biggest impact. Processes which have historically been time consuming and resource intensive have become simple and efficient. For Engineers to add a new desktop at our remote sites we simply ship out a 10ZiG Thin Client and ask the user to plug the unit in themselves. Once in, we just deploy an image remotely and they are ready to go. Enabling our Engineers remote access has saved them valuable time which they can now use to add value to QHotels elsewhere."

The 10ZiG Team have visited QHotels at various stages throughout their project. Furthermore, the QHotels Engineers have also visited 10ZiG's UK Head Office to work alongside the 10ZiG Engineers in order to solve any ongoing integration challenges presented to the devices. Kelly also cited this as a plus point of 10ZiG over his experience with other vendors, "I am pretty certain that we would not have been offered the chance to utilize testing facilities and Engineering staff from many other vendors, if any. This further enhanced our impression of 10ZiG."

"There are also a host of other benefits that we know we will see from the 10ZiG solution in the future, including

the increased lifetime of the devices. Once we have a full 10ZiG Thin Client environment, we will have an agnostic hardware solution that isn't limited by the life support of a local Windows OS. Another future benefit is the energy savings we will see from using Thin Clients. Typically our PC range uses between 50-100 watts in comparison to the 10ZiG units that run at 12 watts. Over all of our sites we should see a sizeable reduction in our energy costs and CO2 footprint which is a bonus and underpins our Green Tourism Accreditation."

In summary, David Kelly cites the reasons why QHotels would recommend 10ZiG, "There are a couple of main reasons I would recommend 10ZiG, with the first being the ease of management and visibility we now have over our desktops. The solution has drastically changed the way we provide IT support to our workforce for the better."

"Another feather in 10ZiG's cap is their level of personal service. They have continued to show that they are a company we are happy to do business with. It has also been refreshing that from the POC stage through to post-sales support, I have received a very personal level of contact throughout. Other companies chop and change Account Managers regularly so it has been great to keep that relationship going with a group of individuals at 10ZiG."

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