



## Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.

Automated path management, tiered storage, and technical support from EMC boost reliability, ease growing pains, and help ensure the highest level of customer service

A global hospitality company, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. owns and operates some of the most recognized brands in the industry, including St. Regis, The Luxury Collection, Sheraton, Westin, Four Points by Sheraton, W, Le Méridien and the recently announced Aloft and Element Hotels.

With over 870 properties as well as timeshares worldwide, the company's 145,000 employees rely heavily on IT to ensure continuous access to the information needed to conduct business—whether it is mined from the data warehouse for effective decision making; used by property desk personnel to quickly check on availability, rates, and reservations; or by customers booking accommodations through the company's website.

Driven by a steady stream of property acquisitions, the expansion of business-critical applications and messaging systems, and the increasing use of a rapidly growing data warehouse, Starwood Hotels & Resorts decided in 2002 to transition from a mainframe to a distributed server environment to better accommodate operational demands. At the same time, a powerful, centralized, and easily scaled EMC® storage infrastructure was deployed to support an optimized storage model capable of providing industry-leading performance, reliability, manageability, and scalability.

Within this environment, which now encompasses five globally located data centers, EMC PowerPath® software plays a key role in facilitating consistently high application performance and availability. It dynamically adapts to changing workloads, proactively detects problematic paths, and if an imbalance or issue is detected, it automatically selects an alternate path between host and storage to quickly route data to applications.

“From day one, when we began deploying our distributed environment, we started using PowerPath,” says Athy Pandey, senior architect for Enterprise Systems Storage. “It has given us multi-pathing capability which enables us to access the disk in multiple ways and enables us to maximize performance and uptime. PowerPath is the backbone for our path management and all of the servers attached to our SAN have it.”

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## EMC storage environment expands

Over the course of a few years, Starwood Hotels & Resorts' EMC storage environment has grown considerably. Today, it encompasses multiple tiers and remotely mirrored storage including EMC Symmetrix®, EMC CLARiiON®, EMC Celerra®, and EMC Centera® systems. The use of powerful EMC storage and content management software and cutting-edge business continuity solutions that include EMC PowerPath, EMC ControlCenter®, EMC DiskXtender®, EMC EmailXtender®, EMC Documentum®, SAN Copy™, SnapView™, the EMC TimeFinder® family, EMC MirrorView™, and EMC Symmetrix Remote Data Facility (SRDF®) strengthen the environment and significantly extend the company's information management and business protection capabilities. In addition, by leveraging this powerful and easily extendible storage infrastructure, Starwood Hotels & Resorts can quickly and economically keep pace with data stores that have been doubling annually.

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**Athy Pandy, Senior Architect for Enterprise Systems Storage**

“EMC solutions really live up to the sales pitch,” says Steve Golinski, senior director, Datacenter Engineering and Operations. “The unbeatable reliability of these solutions and the level of support behind them are key differentiators. Our relationship with EMC is probably one of the best.”

As the environment has grown, so has the use of EMC PowerPath software. Currently, Starwood Hotels & Resorts holds approximately 180 to 200 PowerPath licenses, which along with those of many other satisfied customers, have contributed to EMC's 500,000 PowerPath license milestone reached this past May. The company is also one of the first to use new EMC PowerPath Migration Enabler software, which can eliminate application downtime during data migrations or when implementing storage virtualization.

“In our business, change management is critical,” says Pandy. “PowerPath Migration Enabler lets us easily and seamlessly migrate data without the operating system's and application's knowledge. PowerPath always seems to be ahead of the competition in introducing functionality to make our lives easier. We are proud to be a part of this PowerPath milestone and expect continued value from the product moving forward.”

## Knowledgeable, experienced support for fast problem resolution

In addition to helping Starwood Hotels & Resorts successfully build out its EMC storage infrastructure and maximize the value of EMC software applications, the EMC Global Services team ensures that problems are addressed and resolved as quickly as possible.

“If we don't get the support we need to keep things up and running, we can't support our internal customers,” says Pandy. “EMC addresses issues immediately—even when other components are involved. We just explain the problem and we know that within a very short period of time they'll get back to us with a solution. If it is a NAS problem, EMC brings in the right technical people to work with our network folks. If it's a database problem, they've got database experts. They have saved us a couple of times and have helped us build trust with those who rely on these systems to do their jobs.”

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## High marks for the total customer experience

From its presales experiences with the EMC account team to ongoing technical support, the Starwood Hotels & Resorts IT team has been impressed with EMC's dedication to maintaining a long-term relationship with the company.

"Our EMC account team understands our business and keeps us informed about upcoming EMC innovations that can help us extract even more value from our environment," says Pandy. "When a sale is made, they don't just go away. Everyone, from accounting to support, remains committed to furthering our success. It's those experiences and that level of support that make a difference."



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Customer Profile  
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