GBCblue is offering fully managed guest computing to the hotel market and anticipating 25% sales growth as it expands into new markets

DELL

- **Desktop Computing**
- **Networking**
- **Security**
- **Services**

> "Hotel operators typically order different capabilities for business center computers than for computers that they place on the concierge floor or in the lobby. Dell has the ability to customize each individual computer, which is a powerful competitive advantage for us as well as a time-saver."
>
> *Ken York,*
> *Vice President of Operations,*
> *GBCblue*

Customer Profile

Company:	GBCblue
Industry:	Travel, Hospitality and Tourism
Country:	United States
Employees:	15
Web:	www.gbcblue.com

Business Need
GBCblue places guest computing systems in hotels around the world and manages them on an ongoing basis. It needed help designing a network operations center to support its managed services, and it needed a hardware partner able to customize client computers to meet the needs of high-end hotel chains.

Solution
The company engaged Dell™ IT Consulting Services to design a secure and efficient network operations center, populated with Dell PowerEdge™ servers. GBCblue provides hotel business centers with Dell OptiPlex™ desktop computers and Dell Latitude™ and Inspiron™ laptop computers. And it provides sleek, powerful and custom-branded Dell XPS™ One all-in-one desktop computers to upscale hotel lobbies. Dell Configuration and Deployment Services configures the desktop and laptop machines before they leave the factory so that GBCblue technicians can focus on the company's maintenance and support needs.

GBCblue™
GUEST COMPUTING SYSTEMS

Benefits
- **Projected 25% increase in revenue in short term**
- **Real-time, 24×7 monitoring of computers in customer locations**
- **50% faster deployment of new customer systems**
- **Custom branding of systems possible for each hotel chain**
- **Enhanced security for systems used by hotel guests**
- **75% of new customers select GBCblue for design and performance of Dell XPS One**
- **Processing power enables expansion of system functionality over time**
- **New markets opening for GBCblue-provided systems**

Keeping up with the needs of increasingly tech-savvy guests is a daunting task for today's hoteliers, as travelers often expect hotels to provide a computer that they can use to check e-mail and remain productive during their stay. To accommodate these guests, many hotels place personal computers in guest rooms and business centers. But hotel owners don't want to go into the computer business—they need someone to accept the task of managing and maintaining the computer systems so that the hotel staff can focus on its traditional hospitality duties.

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GBCblue welcomes that management responsibility: the company was founded to meet the demand for guest computing systems in the hospitality industry. Today, it has computers in more than 1,000 sites inside 300 hotels located around the world. GBCblue established a leadership position by understanding exactly what hotels require in a guest computing system—but as the market has evolved, so have those requirements.

Dell helps GBCblue find the right formula

Dell has played an important role for GBCblue from the beginning, ever since GBCblue began to develop its strategy of creating a fleet of remotely managed workstations for hotel locations. "We offer a turnkey solution including 24-hour monitoring of each computer," says Ken York, vice president of operations at GBCblue. "Hoteliers reap the benefits of providing first-class technology options for their customers, without the expense and difficulty of managing client terminals."

To help design the wide area network infrastructure and network operations center required to monitor the fleet of computers, the GBCblue team turned to Dell IT Consulting. "We spent a lot of time looking at different development experts and chose Dell Services for the team's experience and the flexibility of its program," says York. "The Dell team helped us design our network operations center using customized Dell PowerEdge 2650 servers."

The servers perform functions vital to the GBCblue business model, including running the management applications used to ensure hotel computers are working and secure. They also process the more than 3 million credit card payments hotel guests make each year to GBCblue for computer use. "The Dell PowerEdge servers give us the reliable, enterprise-class performance we need for our mission-critical applications and databases," says York.

Technology at Work

Services

Dell™ Configuration and Deployment Services

Dell IT Consulting Services

Dell Support Services

Hardware

Dell Inspiron™ 5150 laptop computers

Dell Latitude™ D610, X300, D505 and D400 laptop computers

Dell OptiPlex™ GX280 and GX270 desktop computers

Dell PowerEdge™ 2650 servers

Dell XPS™ One all-in-one desktop computers

Software

Microsoft® Office

Microsoft Windows® XP

"We have been so impressed with Dell servers that we use them throughout our network operations center and our own internal IT infrastructure."

GBCblue selected Dell OptiPlex GX270 and GX280 desktop computers to place in hotels for guest use. "The Dell OptiPlex computers provide ample processing power for business applications, gaming or Web surfing," says York. "Their reliability has been excellent, helping us keep our ratio of use-to-service-calls one of the best in the industry. That's one reason we also use Dell PCs for our own employees, including Dell OptiPlex desktop computers and Dell Latitude laptops."

New opportunities bring new design challenges

The combination of Dell equipment and GBCblue's comprehensive support was the right formula for many hoteliers, and the GBCblue systems became computers of choice for several hotel business centers. Building on this initial success, the GBCblue team identified an opportunity to expand beyond the business center and help their customers provide better service. "Hoteliers are always looking to broaden their connection with their guests," says York. "One way to do that is by putting computer kiosks in lobbies and other busy hotel locations where guests can use them to find information about hotel amenities, such as golf courses or spas. Hotels could even use our computers to deliver guest services, such as personalized photo postcards printed on the spot."

Expanding beyond the business center would also enable GBCblue to develop new business opportunities. "The hospitality industry is finite because there are only so many high-end business and luxury hotels," explains York. "In order to grow, GBCblue needs to find new applications in the hotel industry as well as new customers in other related industry sectors."

To help achieve these goals, the GBCblue team decided to broaden its client offerings. "The challenge was to find a system with outstanding visual appeal that would complement the high quality interior design present in an upscale hotel lobby," says York. The

new computer had to be an all-in-one design to conserve space, and it had to be sturdy and secure to endure the increased public exposure. "It was essential to safeguard guests' personal financial information as they entered it into the computer," he adds.

Dell simplifies the upgrade process

GBCblue achieved its initial success using Dell OptiPlex desktop computers and chose to stay with Dell as it moved into higher-end hotels. "Our customers trust Dell, and staying on a Dell platform allows our engineers to develop to a single set of technologies," says York. "It also saves us time and money because we can simplify our work by using the same setup and configuration options for all of our computers."

The Dell team recommended the Dell XPS One computer with Intel® Core 2 Duo® processors for GBCblue's new hotel guest computing system. The XPS One has an all-in-one design that features a high-definition, 20-inch flat panel display and complete multimedia functionality, including an integrated digital camera. Just as important to GBCblue is the system's sleek, stylish appearance. "The Dell XPS One is an absolutely gorgeous computer, both front and back," says York. "That's important because out in a lobby or seating area, you don't know which part of the computer will face hotel guests."

50% faster delivery of custom-branded GBCblue product

York's team decided to standardize on the Dell XPS One for luxury hotels and upscale chains looking to expand computer use beyond the business center. GBCblue simplified the deployment process by engaging Dell Configuration and Deployment Services to configure the new systems to GBCblue's custom requirements and load the software at the Dell factory. This saves configuration and software imaging time for GBCblue's technicians, enabling them to ship systems out approximately 50 percent faster.

"Device configurations can vary even within a single hotel, because hotel operators typically order different

"The monitoring and communications technology that Dell Services designed into our infrastructure differentiates us from our competitors because it helps make our computers uniquely suited for use in hotel lobbies."

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capabilities for business center computers than for computers that they place on the concierge floor or in the lobby," says York. "Dell has the ability to customize each individual computer, which is a powerful competitive advantage for us as well as a time-saver."

The Dell team also provides factory branding to meet the requirements of GBCblue customers. "Many of the major, upscale chains want to deliver a consistent brand experience," says York. "They want us to brand our systems with the particular hotel's identity, and our partnership with Dell permits us to offer custom branding on the Dell XPS One. Dell gives us several factory branding options, from the computer exterior to on-screen user pages, depending on the preferences of each hotel operator."

Expanding functionality, enhanced security

The Intel Core 2 Duo processors in the XPS One computers give GBCblue the processing headroom to add new functionalities, and several hotel chains have begun pilot projects with GBCblue to explore new capabilities and uses for the system. "One prominent chain is turning the lobby of its flagship hotel into a destination where people can relax, have beverages and explore online," says York. "The main attraction of the area will be the Dell XPS One computers we install. The hotel management's vision is to include

TV tuners on the computers so that people can watch TV and movies on them. The processing headroom provided by the Intel Core 2 Duo processors, along with the wide screen and high-definition video, were big factors in the selection process."

Technology built into the Dell-designed network operating center enabled the GBCblue team to enhance the security of the Dell XPS One computers. "The monitoring and communications technology that Dell Services designed into our infrastructure allowed us to add protection against hardware keystroke loggers—devices that criminals can attach to computer keyboards to obtain personal information," says York. "We have the ability to communicate with each of our XPS One computers to shut down the affected USB port and alert a field technician when we detect an attack. Having this extra protection differentiates us from our competitors because it helps make our computers uniquely suited for use in hotel lobbies, where this type of attack is most likely to occur."

Projected 25% revenue increase through partnership with Dell

The attractive design of the XPS One computer and its potential to inspire new uses has opened up opportunities for the both the GBCblue team and its customers. "With the Dell XPS One computer, we are helping hoteliers increase their interaction with customers throughout their hotel properties," says

York. "At the same time, the XPS One is helping GBCblue create new sales opportunities in what is otherwise a finite hotel market. For example, a major luxury chain has agreed to use our new systems for interactive kiosks that will enable guests to take a virtual tour of the hotel's attractions and make reservations directly on the computer."

Dell and the XPS One computer are also helping GBCblue find new customers outside the hotel industry. "We are talking to companies in the retail industry about using the XPS One as the basis for in-store customer computing services," says York. "One of our most exciting projects is a trial deployment with a global package shipping company that operates 4,500 retail stores. The two pilot systems we placed with them are already some of our most heavily used computers."

The Dell XPS One computer systems are also helping GBCblue drive more business: the team is anticipating increased sales as more customers join the fold. "In the short term, we expect sales to increase by an estimated 25 percent over the next year as we continue to bring the XPS One computers into the market," says York. "To date, several of our existing hotel customers have migrated to the XPS One, and 75 percent of our new customers have joined us based on its design and performance. In the long term, we believe there are few limits to the success we can have with Dell technology behind us."

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