CASE STUDY

Enhancing Customer Service with a New Fleet of PCs

Intel® Core™ i5 and i7 vPro™ Processors

IT Efficiency
PC Upgrade
Remote Management
Transportation

Intel® Core™ vPro™ processors help Princess Cruises empower call center workers, enhance customer engagement, reduce downtime, and cut costs.

Princess Cruises is one of the largest global cruise lines, carrying more than a million passengers each year to more than 300 destinations around the world. Business technology has come a long way since one of the company’s ships starred in the popular U.S. television series The Love Boat in the 1970s. Today, Princess Cruises uses more than 6,000 geographically dispersed PCs to handle a full range of business tasks. About 780 of those PCs are in the company’s worldwide customer call center, where an expanding range of services requires ever-more PC processing power and smart hardware-assisted capabilities.

Challenges

• Meet new customer service demands by providing the desktop processing power to run an expanded set of applications in the global call center.
• Save space in the call center by continuing to use the mini PC form factor.
• Reduce energy consumption by powering down call center computers during off hours, while ensuring computers are booted and ready to go when employees arrive at work.
• Accelerate PC diagnostics and solve problems for geographically remote computers from a central location to eliminate costly deskside visits and decrease disruptions for employees.

Solution

• Lenovo® ThinkCentre® M Series Tiny desktops with Intel® Core™ i5 and i7 vPro™ processors to run a variety of business applications on Microsoft Windows® 7.

Technology Results

• Performance increase of 15 percent for the company’s internal booking engine with the Intel Core i7 processor.
• Reduced downtime using KVM Remote Control (Keyboard, Video, Mouse), a unique feature of the Intel vPro platform, and additional out-of-band management capabilities to diagnose and remediate systems remotely.

“With the Intel® Core™ vPro™ processors in our new PCs, call center workers have more ways to help the passenger, communicate with them, and build a relationship of trust—which is key to bringing the customer back to us for their next cruise.”

– Alberto Cedeira,
Manager,
Holland America Princess and Asia Operations
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**Business Value**
- **Stronger customer service** with more powerful desktops and an expanded application set, enabling call center employees to deliver exceptional, consistent customer service that enhances the company's competitive position.
- **Reduced costs** because administrators can power down computers when they are not in use, saving the company money.
- **Improved productivity** with call center computers ready to work as soon as users are. Remote management also cost-effectively helps speed repairs and decrease unproductive downtime for users.

**Navigating the Needs of Today's Cruise Customers**

Customer service during the booking process has never been more important for the cruise industry. More customers are contacting cruise lines directly rather than going through a travel agent. And while many of today's tech-savvy customers prefer to self-book online, many other customers—including a growing number of retirees from the "Baby Boom" generation—prefer speaking with a service representative for assistance.

Princess Cruises has responded to meet this customer demand. “By calling our customer-direct line, a person can connect with a cruise vacation planner, or CVP, who has the training and resources to ensure a great customer experience,” says Alberto Cedeira, Manager, Holland America Princess and Asia Operations. “Our system links the CVP to the caller’s booking number, so passengers always deal with the same person when they call back for updates, additional questions, or another cruise. They are often on a first-name basis with each other.”

Providing this level of service, multiplied by 17 ships carrying up to 3,000 passengers each, requires powerful PCs in the call center. “Our in-house customer information and booking application has grown over the years to include more and more information,” says Cedeira.
“CVPs use their PCs to interact with detailed passenger files including the customer’s contact information, previous cruises, preferences for accommodations and entertainment, and even which destinations they’d like to visit in the future based on our customer survey results.”

Also contributing to the need for PC processing power are recently added CVP activities like e-mail and Web surfing. “People who call in may not be very computer-oriented, so today the CVP does all types of Web searches for them, gathering information on things to do at the destination, side trips available, local dining, the best beaches in the area, and so on,” says Cedeira. “Many customers also want us to e-mail documents to them that they can print out and carry with them. All this takes a lot longer if call center PC performance is sluggish.”

Choosing the Right Desktop Processor
With most of the 780 PCs in the call center reaching warranty expiration dates, it was time to choose a replacement model. “We wanted to stay with Lenovo Tiny PCs, which are designed to run as regular PCs yet take up less desk space in our call center environment,” says Cedeira. “But we needed greater processing power than our previous PCs to meet changing call center demands. These are the primary machines for the main revenue-generating department of the company, so making the right choice was important.”

In addition to small size and big processing capability, Princess Cruises required PCs with remote power management technology. “IT wanted the ability to remotely shut down our call center computers during off hours to reduce energy consumption and save money,” says Cedeira. “But we also needed to make sure computers are booted and ready to go by the time call center employees arrive for work.”

To meet all of the call center requirements, Princess Cruises selected Lenovo ThinkCentre M92/M93 Tiny desktops with Intel Core i5 vPro processors and—for CVPs and supervisors—Intel Core i7 vPro processors. The computers run a variety of software applications on Windows 7, and the IT group uses Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager* (SCCM) for PC management.

Increasing Performance by 15 Percent
The Intel Core vPro processors give Princess Cruises the performance needed to run a wider range of business applications. “The new desktops have either dual-core or quad-core processors compared with our previous single-core computers, and also have 8 GB of RAM compared with 4 GB for the previous PCs,” says Cedeira. “In the past, our call center PCs basically functioned like terminals for our mainframe booking engine. But now we can have e-mail, spreadsheets, and other applications that require more processing power. And we estimate our internal booking software is running 15 percent faster with the Intel Core i7 processors.

Improving Customer Service
The processor upgrade and new applications empower the CVPs at Princess Cruises to deliver an outstanding customer experience. “With the Intel Core vPro processors in our new PCs, call center workers have more ways to help the passenger, communicate with them, and build a relationship of trust—which is key to bringing the customer back to us for their next cruise,” says Cedeira.

Faster, more capable machines also mean quicker lookups and Web searches to gather information for passengers. “Customers are happy because it doesn’t take 25 minutes for them to get an update on something,” says Cedeira. “At the same time, the

Lessons Learned
“In a competitive business like the cruise industry, the customer experience is everything. And it doesn’t start when a passenger boards one of our ships,” says Alberto Cedeira, Manager, Holland America Princess and Asia Operations. “It begins with the first call a customer makes to our contact center. That’s why we believe it is important to ensure call center employees have the desktop applications and processing power they need to deliver the best customer experience possible.”

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– Alberto Cedeira, Manager, Holland America Princess and Asia Operations
company benefits from faster turnover of calls and more productivity for call center employees.”

Reducing Downtime from Days to Minutes
By capitalizing on the Intel vPro platform, the company can augment its existing remote management capabilities and maximize the benefits gained from the new processors. “We have some remote locations, such as Alaska, where we provide motor coach and hotel services for our cruise passengers. In the past, if employees there had PC problems, we would have tried to walk the users through a diagnostic process to help identify the issue,” says Cedeira. “With the Intel vPro platform, we can access distant PCs remotely, without requiring help from users. Instead of mail-in repairs or deskside visits that can take days to schedule, now we can solve problems in less than an hour.”

Decreasing Power Consumption
Remote power management capabilities are helping reduce energy consumption for the company’s call center, housed at facilities in Seattle and Valencia, California. “By using the Intel vPro platform, we power systems down at night when they aren’t in use,” says Cedeira. “This capability, plus the energy efficiency of the mini PC form factor, gives us a green solution that helps us save money.”

The IT group also boots up the systems in the morning to ensure call center employees can begin providing excellent customer service as soon as they arrive at work. “Our call center is vital to generating revenue for the business,” says Cedeira. “With the Intel vPro platform, we can make sure our CVPs are productive right away.”

Find the solution that’s right for your organization. Contact your Intel representative, visit Intel’s Business Success Stories for IT Managers, and check out IT Center, Intel’s resource for the IT industry.

For more information about Intel Core processors, visit www.intel.com/core