



Success Story

Mantra Group: Power to Roam and Grow



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Industry
Hospitality

The Challenge

Keep up with business growth, integrating acquired properties while providing unmatched customer reservation services.

The Solution

Deliver a high-performance reservation system by accelerating Microsoft SQL Server database using a NetApp® all-flash system with integrated data protection.

Benefits

- Supports up to a 100% increase in business
- Boosts database performance, helping Mantra Group be more competitive with faster reservation system response times
- Enables nondisruptive operations 24/7/365
- Saves IT staff time and lowers costs with rich data management and protection

Meeting High Expectations for Hospitality

If you're vacationing or traveling in Australia, New Zealand, or Bali, there's a good chance you'll stay at a Mantra Group property. Its three high-profile brands—Peppers, Mantra, and BreakFree—offer options from refined, indulgent resorts to economical hotel rooms.

Mantra guests know what they want, whether they are traveling for business or pleasure. They demand excellent, readily available services everywhere they go, and they expect Mantra to deliver. Each customer interaction with Mantra Group's properties is an opportunity for the company to demonstrate its commitment to excellence and reinforce customer loyalty.

The Challenge

Customer responsiveness during business growth

Growth is a mantra for Mantra Group. Already the largest Australia-based hotel and resort marketer and operator, it has over 11,000 rooms under management. When Garry Rich joined the company nearly a decade ago, Mantra Group had 17 properties. Today, it has 117.

"If we keep to our high standards, the only certainty in our business is growth," says Rich, now group general manager, IT. "Our database and systems need to be ready to support whatever new properties or services the business decides to bring into our portfolio—sometimes without much notice."

Mantra Group is expanding its presence in the Asia Pacific region, acquiring new properties, and increasing its online distribution. With more acquisitions on the horizon, the company needed to maintain outstanding performance for its most critical application: its SIHOT central reservation system. Every aspect of the business depends on this system, from call center employees to online travel agent (OTA) partners. If performance suffers, customer reservations, loyalty, and revenue are at risk.

The central reservation system was already performing well, but Mantra Group wanted additional headroom to support growth. It also needed to protect its growing data without any impact on production workloads.

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Group General Manager IT, Mantra Group

conducting complex queries across many properties, it can be difficult to predict the real-time load on our systems,” says Rich. “We receive tens of thousands of online hits and queries daily, and we can’t allow response times to degrade. The faster we can present room inventory online to our customers, the happier they are and the more reservations we receive.”

The Solution

Flash storage with efficient data protection

Mantra Group began looking at flash storage solutions to scale performance for the Microsoft SQL Server database supporting its reservation system. Performance, manageability, scalability, and data protection were high on the list of business requirements; however, the team found that many all-flash offerings lacked both maturity and features that they expected from their storage solution. In migrating to flash storage, Mantra Group wanted to deliver fast performance while maintaining the powerful software features that help the company manage and protect its systems and data with the utmost efficiency.

“In the past two years, we’ve been very successful in revamping our data protection processes using NetApp offerings such as SnapProtect® data management software and SnapMirror® replication in our FlexPod® environment,” says Rich. “We’re saving money every year with deduplication. We wanted the lower latency that solid-state drives could

provide, but we didn’t want to sacrifice the critical data management features that enable our staff and budgets to keep up with our fast expansion in the region.”

After consulting with NetApp for guidance, Mantra Group moved its SQL Server database to a NetApp All-Flash FAS system with integrated data protection. The company now benefits from a scalable architecture that delivers the application responsiveness its fast-growing customer base demands without compromising the efficiency and protection of its IT operations.

“Our NetApp All-Flash FAS system supports our data protection processes,” says Rich. “We’re benefitting from super-fast storage as well as elegant data protection. This helps keep our business moving ahead without interruption.”

Business Benefits

Efficient, reliable retention of data

Even as Mantra Group grows rapidly, it can keep its central IT staff lean and protect its data with rich data management features such as a single pane of glass management console, disk-to-disk backups, snapshot copies, off-site replication, and deduplication. Reliable backups mean no lost data, allowing Mantra Group to provide the best possible customer service.

“We have simplified data management and enabled better data protection now that we can seamlessly back up all of our reservation and customer data to meet our recovery requirements without

worrying about performance impact,” says Rich. “We use NetApp SnapProtect to back up all our business-critical applications and file shares. It’s simple, it works, and it doesn’t impact our production systems or staff productivity. We’ve been able to maintain a very high frequency of backups, even as our data grows by up to 40% annually. We can back up a terabyte of data to disk in just a few minutes. Further to this, by utilizing All-Flash FAS, our backup and recovery strategies do not need to change. It’s business as usual, which avoids the administrative overhead of training staff in new systems and processes.”

Growing market share with fast reservations

By providing fast response times for room quotes and avoiding customer defections from its websites and online distribution partners, Mantra Group is winning market share. Last year, 1 in 10 Australians stayed at a Mantra Group property, and customer conversions are above the industry average.

“By moving to NetApp All-Flash FAS, we have increased our database performance and are meeting the fast reservation response times our customers demand,” says Rich. “Our new All-Flash FAS systems are serving our data several times faster with consistent latency performance even during our busiest times.”

Ready to double down under

Mantra Group can now support even the most aggressive expansion plans, with database I/O capable of serving

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more than 200 properties without any noticeable performance impact on the central reservation system. This means that when customers are planning their vacations, they can locate the best properties and rooms within seconds without fail.

Rich concludes, “Accelerating our central reservation database on NetApp all-flash systems with integrated data protection absolutely makes Mantra Group more competitive. Our customers don’t have to wait for important information about their vacations, and we’ve removed a barrier to business growth. With our NetApp All-Flash FAS system, we could double the number of properties we manage over the next three years while providing the high level of performance our customers and employees expect.”

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

FlexPod Environment

NetApp FAS8040 all-flash system

NetApp FAS3250 and FAS2240 storage systems

Cisco Unified Computing System servers

Cisco Nexus switches

NetApp Software

NetApp Data ONTAP® operating system

NetApp SnapProtect

NetApp SnapVault® technology

NetApp SnapMirror

NetApp Snapshot® and SnapRestore® technologies

NetApp deduplication

Third-Party Products

Applications: SIHOT central reservation system

Database: Microsoft SQL Server 2012 R2

Virtualization (for application tier): VMware vSphere 5.5

Operating System: Windows Server 2012 R2

Protocols

FCoE for SQL databases

NFS for virtual environment



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