



Hotel Group Gains Clear View of Software Assets Ahead of First License Reconciliation

Customer:

Extended Stay Hotels

Website:

www.extendedstayhotels.com

Customer Size:

10,000 employees

Country or Region:

United States

Industry: Hospitality

Partner: Softmart

Customer Profile:

Based in Spartanburg, South Carolina, Extended Stay Hotels has 685 locations in the United States and Canada, representing more than 76,000 rooms nationwide under five brand names.

Software and Services:

Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

- Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager

Services

- Microsoft Enterprise Agreement
- Microsoft Volume Licensing
- Software Asset Management
- SAM Assist

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- Ira Greenfield, Vice President of Technology, Extended Stay Hotels

As it approached the first True-Up license reconciliation for its Microsoft Enterprise Agreement, Extended Stay Hotels needed to get an accurate inventory of its Microsoft software licenses. Working with Microsoft partner Softmart on a Software Asset Management (SAM) Assist engagement, the hotel group gained better control of software assets, eliminated guesswork, avoided unnecessary costs, saved time, and gained support for new initiatives.

Business Needs

Extended Stay Hotels operates throughout the United States and Canada under five brand names, including Extended Stay America and Homestead Studio Suites. It has more than 2,200 PCs spread among 685 properties. It licenses Microsoft software for those computers under a Microsoft Enterprise Agreement, part of the Microsoft Volume Licensing program.

Extended Stay first entered into an Enterprise Agreement in 2008 to cover the Microsoft Core Client Access License (CAL) Suite and then upgraded to a new agreement in 2010 to step up to the Enterprise CAL Suite. The step-up added several beneficial components to the Enterprise Agreement including Active Directory Rights Management Services and Microsoft Forefront security products. The hotel group also had an Enrollment for Application Platform to cover its Microsoft SQL Server database implementation.

In 2011, Extended Stay Hotels was approaching its first True-Up license reconciliation for its new Enterprise Agreement. Ira Greenfield, Vice President of Technology at Extended Stay Hotels, wanted to make sure his company was meeting the requirements of its Enterprise Agreement and that it provided the correct number of licenses, no more and no less.

“We were tracking licensing allocation in various databases, but none provided the comprehensive level of detail that we desired,” says Greenfield. “We needed a system to show exactly what we had. I wanted to know if we were effectively using all of the licenses that we had purchased and to avoid buying additional, unnecessary licenses. We also wanted to be able to prevent end users from installing software without our knowledge.”

In addition, the geographically dispersed work force added complexity to the task of accurately inventorying the software that was installed on employee computers. Complicating matters further, some governmental customers provided hardware and software for COLSA contractors, and it could be challenging to separate COLSA assets from those provided by the government.

Solution

Extended Stay Hotels had been acquiring software through Softmart, a Microsoft partner with Gold competencies in Volume Licensing and Software Asset Management (SAM), for several years. Knowing that the hotel group was due for its True-Up license reconciliation in April 2011, Softmart contacted Greenfield and suggested that he might want to take advantage of the Microsoft SAM Assist program to quickly get an accurate assessment of the company’s software assets.

Greenfield accepted the suggestion. “We take compliance seriously, but over the course of a year it is extremely difficult to catch everything,” he says. “I didn’t anticipate any big surprises—but having never gone through this process before, you never know.”

Greenfield had already installed Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager to help manage the PCs at all 685 properties. So he used System Center Configuration Manager to scan every PC and sent the report on installed software, along with the most recent Microsoft License Statement, to Softmart.

Softmart compared the two data sets, checking with Greenfield on a few areas where there were discrepancies between what was installed and what was licensed. It turned out that many of those gaps represented original equipment manufacturer license purchases for which Greenfield needed to find documentation.

From Greenfield’s perspective, Softmart provided more than just a licensing reconciliation. “Softmart offered advice on how we could reallocate licenses for products that we were not using to products that we were,” says Greenfield. “We discovered that there were some cases of licenses allocated to computers that had been retired.”

The final report showed just a few minor gaps—a few SQL Server licenses and one Windows Server license were needed. “The experience was helpful and educational. Softmart is very service oriented and made the process very easy,” says Greenfield.

Benefits

Through the SAM Assist engagement with Softmart, Extended Stay Hotels gained a much more accurate view of its software assets across the enterprise. Additional benefits include:

Gaining better control. By using System Center Configuration Manager as an agentless asset management solution, Extended Stay Hotels was able to quickly conduct an asset inventory by simply querying the company’s existing Active Directory user and device database and identifying all software installed on each device inventoried. Now the company knows at all times what software is installed where. “We also use System Center Configuration Manager to detect unauthorized software being installed and remove it to maintain compliance,” Greenfield says.

Eliminating guesswork. “The SAM Assist engagement eliminated the guesswork about what we were licensed for and what we *should* be licensed for,” says Greenfield. “It helped us access and fully comprehend the information that was readily available.” System Center Configuration Manager also enabled Extended Stay Hotels to import its current Microsoft License Statement—in Microsoft Excel format—to see all the Microsoft software that the company had licensed and reconcile that against the current inventory.

Avoiding unnecessary costs. By finding licenses that were allocated to retired computers, Greenfield was able to avoid purchasing unneeded licenses.

Saving time. Greenfield estimates that the efficient SAM reconciliation saved Extended Stay Hotels a significant amount of time. "Softmart helped us save weeks and weeks of collecting and analyzing information to understand the results," Greenfield notes.

Planning for new initiatives. Getting an accurate inventory of software and hardware assets is supporting the hotel group's plans for new initiatives, such as virtualization. "We are now moving forward with deployments of some new applications in a virtualized environment, using some of the information that we captured in the SAM engagement," Greenfield says.