

Australian adventure travel specialist explores savings with Dell KACE



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*Donovan Petersen, IT Manager,
Peterpans Adventure Travel*

Customer Profile

Industry:	Travel, Hospitality and Tourism
Country:	Australia
Web:	www.peterpans.com

Business Need

As the company became more established and autonomous at the branch level, many different systems were introduced to the network and it became necessary to find a solution that could be used to efficiently deploy across dissimilar hardware.

Solution

Peterpans Adventure Travel implemented the Dell KACE™ K1000 Management Appliance and the Dell KACE K2000 Deployment Appliance to deploy operating systems updates across the widely distributed network.



Save Time. Save Your Organization Money.

- Eliminated remote site involvement by non-IT staff
- Centralization does away with the need for multiple agents
- 25% reduction in the overall time spent on IT
- 8-month payback on the investment in the Dell KACE Management and Deployment Appliance
- \$96,000 saved in first year
- 77% ROI due to reduction in maintenance cost

Peterpans Adventure Travel was established as an independent Australian travel agency in 1996 and specializes in servicing the youth, student and backpacker travel market in Australia, New Zealand and the Fiji Islands. The company is privately held and at the time of adopting the Dell KACE solution had main outlets in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia, plus 17 other Australian branches and a network of correspondents throughout Asia Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

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The company is Australia’s biggest adventure travel provider and prides itself on arranging best value travel, accommodation and insurance packages and touring programs for young people seeing the world on a shoe-string budget. It also designs experiences for everyone from the cautious first-time traveler through to the seasoned explorer seeking new and extreme adventures.

Peterpans Adventure Travel grew from very small beginnings with only a handful of retail outlets on Australia’s eastern seaboard, and with each of those having only limited IT infrastructure. Back in those early days, according to the company’s IT Manager, Donovan Petersen, “All the nodes were supplied centrally and were all of the same brand and vintage. This meant that the distribution of new operating system updates and the management of other network matters was a relatively straightforward undertaking.”

IT diversity calls for improved systems management

By 2009, the company had grown to some 400 nodes spread right across Australia from Perth on the Indian Ocean to Cairns where the South Pacific Ocean meets the Coral Sea—and the variety of servers and desktops had correspondingly proliferated. As

Petersen explains, “When the network was smaller and more uniform, we could manage perfectly well with standard imaging solutions. As we became more established and autonomous at the branch level, however, many different systems were introduced to the network and so it became necessary to find something we could use to efficiently deploy across dissimilar hardware.”

Petersen continues, “We went looking for a solution that would give us the ability to deploy to any type and brand of node, but only to the nodes that needed addressing for a particular reason, and to do so with just a single image for many different hardware platforms, rather than having to deal with multiple images.”

Many of the Peterpans Adventure Travel outlets are Internet cafés which Donovan Petersen rightly observes

Technology at Work

Solutions

Dell KACE™ K1000 Management Appliance

Dell KACE K2000 Deployment Appliance

are, "Quite hostile environments where the threats of intrusion are strong. This being the case, you need to refresh and rebuild on a very frequent basis so you need tools that ease the strain of having to do this."

Testing and comparison prove Dell KACE superiority

In addition to his position as IT Manager for Peterpans Adventure Travel, Petersen also runs his own small consultancy—he supplied Peterpans' initial IT requirements—and makes it an important part of his job to be aware of all the latest IT and communications developments. As such, he knew of the many systems management and deployment solutions on the market, including the appliance-based solution from Dell KACE, and says he had read good reports of it.

"We looked into a number of different alternatives, including Dell KACE, and when the vendor's Australian reseller, The IT Consultancy Group (ITConsult) suggested we demo the Dell KACE Appliance to try it out for ourselves, we accepted. We did some virtual environment testing and it seemed like a good product. It was really helpful to be able to try out the appliance and get a feel for how it would work in our environment. It looked like the product would do what we wanted initially—distribute the operating systems updates—plus give us a lot of other useful functionality that we would want to implement in later stages."

Peterpans negotiated with ITConsult for the purchase of the Dell KACE K1000 Management Appliance and the Dell KACE K2000 Deployment Appliance. As Petersen puts it, "There is no doubt that the solution is a very comprehensive one."

Training in just three days

Petersen's role at Peterpans Adventure Travel became a whole lot more challenging when—not long after completing his rollout of the K2000 Deployment Appliance—the company made a strategic acquisition that doubled its number of outlets from 22 to 44, including more high-maintenance Internet cafés.

Once the Dell KACE Appliance is plugged into the network, however, it is designed to manage any server, desktop or laptop, and while Peterpans' growth by acquisition dramatically enlarges its IT infrastructure, it presents no added complexity. With the fully integrated appliance-based architecture of the Dell KACE Appliance, there are no hardware or software prerequisites and maintenance is virtually eliminated.

The initial installation of the appliance was carried out by Donovan in Cairns in a matter of days, and he then went around the next few sites before training contractors for the remainder—himself having previously been trained by ITConsult in just three days. Not having any IT staff anywhere in his wide-flung domain and thus being reliant on contractors as required, he makes the point, "Once the solution is out in the field and running it's pretty much self-managed. That's one of the reasons we like the Dell KACE Appliances so much.

25% reduction in IT maintenance time

"Before using the Dell KACE Appliances, all on-site IT matters had to be handled by people who had other jobs to do. They had to stop what they were doing—running the core business of selling Peterpans Adventure Travel packages—and look at IT needs for which they were not really qualified. Now, however,

"There is no doubt that the (Dell KACE) solution is a very comprehensive one."

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while we still call on our people and contractors and ISPs for support requests and basic trouble-shooting that are unrelated to deployment, I estimate that having the Dell KACE Appliances has resulted in at least a 25 percent reduction in the overall time spent on IT at the outlets. Perhaps more—we had no records of actual IT time spent previously.”

While the initial objective was the ability to refresh the network without having to address nodes unnecessarily and to deploy a single image for everything

that did need refreshing rather than have to manage multiple images, Petersen expects to ultimately adopt almost all the functionality of the Dell KACE Management and Deployment Appliances. He speaks well of the solution, saying its simplicity meant he was fully trained in just three days, and has special praise for our local reseller: “The people at ITConsult are available when you want them and are definitely proactive, too. They are a very good representative for the product, that’s for sure.”



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