



HotelsCombined.com needed an infrastructure-as-service (IaaS) provider to provide flexibility, scalability, and great customer service to power its high-end online service.

HotelsCombined.com is the world's leading hotel price comparison search engines. The site collects and presents more than 2,500,000 real-time international hotel deals from a database of 235,000 hotels in 225 countries. More than 6.5 million users visit HotelsCombined.com each month to compare prices and make reservations. The company does not charge mark-up fees or additional booking fees, so the service is completely free and valuable tool for users searching for the best hotel deals anywhere in the world.

Creating software, building business
The company's proprietary software streamlines the massive amount of information into one simple and efficient format—aggregating prices from online travel agents including Booking.com, Agoda.com, Expedia.com, Travelocity.com, Hotels.com, and direct from hotels chains including Hilton, Accor Hotels, Choice Hotels, Best Western, and Intercontinental Hotel Group.

HotelsCombined.com provides nearly every possible option for nearly any hotel. Once users find the best deal on the hotel they're searching for, they're taken directly to the site offering that deal to book a reservation.

HotelsCombined.com has created an affiliate program that enables travel bloggers, websites, operators, and media conglomerates to build the HotelsCombined.com search engine directly into their sites.

Affiliates join the program for free and are paid to attract visitors who are interested in booking hotel rooms. The program has gained international recognition for its advanced tools and search functionality for web- or mobile-based businesses. Through

the HotelsCombined.com Affiliate Customer Portal, partners can track their leads, success, payments, and more.

The cost of in-house infrastructure
The HotelsCombined.com search engine required a complex infrastructure solution. Its multi-threaded application architecture collects and processes data from a large number of sources, all in real-time.

Beyond exceptional application performance, the infrastructure needed to have the power, flexibility, and scale to provide an exceptional user experience for customers and affiliates around the world.

However, HotelsCombined.com did not want to create, maintain, and support such a robust infrastructure itself. It felt hosting such an environment internally was a distraction from what the company does best: compile hotel price data and make it searchable. The company wanted to retain the advantage of allowing its developers and management to focus on the business' core competencies.

HotelsCombined.com needed an IaaS partner with computing solutions powerful

Industry

Online travel search and booking

Business Driver

Fast and flexible scaling of servers, storage, and other services.

Why SoftLayer, an IBM Company

SoftLayer offered a complete range of products including load balancers, on-demand virtual server instances, and redundant iSCSI storage.

enough to drive its robust deals search engine, flexible enough to scale with changing demand cycles, and with global content delivery capabilities to serve a worldwide user base. High bandwidth and high-end and low-end servers had to come with a level of cost efficiency that made outsourcing the solution an economic, as well as operational, advantage.

Solution & Results

HotelsCombined.com decided on SoftLayer as its IaaS provider and chose a complete range of products including load balancers, on-demand CloudLayer servers, and redundant iSCSI storage. The company is able to use several thousand cores of processing power provided by the SoftLayer servers.

"There are other providers claiming to offer identical or similar services," said Sunny Gupta, communications manager for HotelsCombined.com.

"We chose SoftLayer based on an its established track record and mature business processes, which is something that is very important to us."

SoftLayer provisions the high-end servers in hours and allows the company to manage its servers directly through its industry-leading Customer Portal, including routine but important management tasks such as changing load-balancer configurations and increasing iSCSI storage space.

"The Customer Portal allows us to care of almost everything we need to without having to make a phone call," said Mr. Gupta. "We like being in control and not needing to make every request through a technical account manager, which could cause significant delays in our operations."

Additionally, HotelsCombined.com chose SoftLayer because it has the newest technologies like scalable cloud

computing, solid-state drives (SSD), and Nehalem X processes.

"Our operations continually demand more processing power, and SoftLayer can scale up to our needs on-demand," said Mr. Gupta.

HotelsCombined.com places a high value on customer service, flexibility, reasonable prices, and being treated with respect.

"Usually you have to pay a significant premium for personal care, or you simply don't get personal care with the cheaper providers," said Mr. Gupta. "We have a great relationship with our account manager, who is always happy to assist us on any matter we raise. The efficiency and advantages of this relationship has led to cost savings as we grow."