

Case Study

Industry: Hospitality

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.

Project: New data center

Major challenge: Six-day turnaround



The background.

For Starwood, one of the world's largest and most prestigious hotel and leisure companies, fast and efficient reservation systems are a must for excellence in customer service. Not only do customers need quick access to reservation availability, but the company's own reservations employees need a system that's fast and reliable. That's why the company decided to upgrade the IT department at its European headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. The headquarters connects the reservation systems for 170 hotels.

The new data center.

Starwood chose Black Box to complete the new data center. The company wanted to build the data center using up-to-date fiber optic and Category 6 unshielded twisted pair (UTP) cable.

The Starwood project presented some challenges:

The first challenge was the location of the new data center. It was to be one floor below the existing data center in an area that was unfinished. The space required construction to turn it into a working area.

That led to the second challenge: the time frame. The construction schedule was very tight, and Black Box had only six working days to transform the space into a data center.

The last challenge involved having as little disruption as possible to the Starwood reservation system.

Black Box conducted several on-site visits and surveys to determine exactly how to meet Starwood's requirements.

The installation.

There were a number of steps involved in transforming the former unfinished space into a data center. The first step was for Black Box to connect all the equipment from the existing data center on the floor above to the new data center.

The next step involved moving all the equipment, including racks, servers, switches, routers, and more to the new data center. Once everything was moved, Black Box technicians set up all the racks, made the rack-to-rack connections, installed the networking equipment, and made all the cable connections. Next all the cabling needed to be tested. This involved checking more than 200 separate fiber optic and CAT6 cable interconnections. Black Box also made all the interconnections for a fiber optic backbone running between several floors.

A successful project.

The project was a success for Starwood. Black Box completed the job on time and on budget. Best of all, the Starwood reservation system was only an interrupted one hour.

"The Black Box team was extremely efficient and professional. I must say that everything went according to the plan, and the help we got from Black Box was really great! You have a great team and they should be commended for doing an excellent job."

Gustaf Burman, IT Project Manager EAME, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.



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