



HOST MARRIOTT  
CORPORATION

### Overview

**Country:** USA

**Industry:** Real Estate Investment

### Customer Profile

Host Marriott Inc., a Real Estate Investment Trust headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, is one of the largest owners of premier lodging properties in the world with assets of over USD \$10 billion.

### Business Situation

Host Marriott needed to upgrade its enterprise information systems in order to improve employee and team productivity, and to help comply with new recordkeeping laws.

### Solution

The company deployed an enterprise portal solution based on Microsoft® SharePoint® Portal Server 2003, Windows SharePoint Services, and other Microsoft desktop and server technologies.

### Benefits

- Information search 2x faster
- Over 400 man-hours saved in 90 days
- Document compliance improved
- Team setup and response 20 percent faster
- Cost of ownership 60 percent below competing solutions

## Leading Hospitality Real Estate Company Improves Productivity with Enterprise Portal

“Compared with other portal systems we considered, SharePoint Portal Server 2003 was cost effective, and the benefits of tight integration with Microsoft Office 2003 were very compelling.”

Wendy Brooks, Web Manager, Host Marriott, Inc.

Host Marriott Inc., a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, is one of the largest owners of premier lodging properties in the world with over USD \$10 billion in managed assets. The company needed to upgrade its aging intranet in order to streamline collaboration, improve productivity, and respond to new laws and corporate initiatives. With help from Microsoft Certified Partner Portal Dynamics, Host Marriott deployed an enterprise portal solution based on Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Portal Server 2003, Windows SharePoint Services, and other Microsoft desktop and server technologies. Initial rollout to Legal Department took less than 3 months and will extend to the rest of the company by year-end. Host Marriott Legal has realized productivity increases through faster information searches, streamlined collaboration, and self-managed team sites. Compliance with corporate information standards has improved, and total cost of ownership is 60 percent lower than other solutions.



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## Situation

Host Marriott Inc., a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT), is one of the largest owners of premier lodging properties in the world. The company's 113 hotels are operated by world-renowned firms including Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Hyatt, Four Seasons, Hilton, Westin and Fairmont. Properties are located in major cities, near convention centers, airports, resort locations, and select office parks. With over 54,000 rooms, the company's holdings represent over USD \$10 billion in total assets. The company is headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland.

### Intranet Limited

Information on Host Marriott's existing intranet could quickly become stale because updates required IT professionals' help. The intranet also lacked an effective search engine, forcing workers to spend increasing time looking for information. Employees collaborated primarily by circulating paper documents or e-mail attachments. This led to simultaneous editing of multiple copies, and the definitive version was often difficult to find. Rolling back to earlier versions or merging multiple contributor's edits required tedious work. Document approval was neither standardized nor automated, lengthening project cycles. After project completion, uncontrolled file copies existed on shared drives and local workstations. This increased the cost of data storage and compromised information security.

### New Laws and Policies

The need for better collaboration and data management tools were brought into sharp focus with passage of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act in 2002. In an attempt to restore investor confidence in financial reports issued by public companies, Sarbanes-Oxley requires companies to create written approval processes and establish internal controls for accuracy and compliance. The new law requires well-defined document tracking and

retention policies that strain conventional collaboration and file-sharing technologies.

In response, Host Marriott's Legal Department developed information management policies to be deployed, first within the Department and then to the rest of the company. These procedures tackled compliance with new regulations while addressing needed improvements in the electronic working environment. Wendy Brooks, Web Manager in the company's IT Department, explains: "We had been looking to replace our intranet and bring the company new collaboration and information sharing capabilities. Sarbanes-Oxley was the push we needed to really get going with a new system."

Host Marriott's attorneys frequently collaborate by comparing and editing in multiple printed versions of a document. Determining which versions they were evaluating was difficult. New guidelines mandated that each new or edited document contain a unique document ID number based on document type, author, and date/time. With the ID displayed on each page, they could immediately see which versions were being compared.

Legal Department also addressed document retention: how long each document should be retained, how it is to be destroyed, and who was responsible for managing the process. At stake were increasing cost of data storage and the risk of keeping outdated documents. Legal defined document types appropriate for its environment (working draft, correspondence, memoranda, contract, etc.), and published appropriate retention timetables for each. But the policies proved difficult to enforce. Once a quarter, employees were asked to clean up their shared drives, but they rarely complied because it was seen as a tedious and non-productive task. A more automated solution

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was needed so that employees could focus on their work rather than on learning detailed procedures.

### **Solution**

With both urgent and long-term business needs defined, company leaders authorized Brooks and her team to develop a replacement for the company's aging intranet. They turned for help to Portal Dynamics, a Microsoft Certified Partner specializing in collaborative information and knowledge solutions for product and process life-cycle management. The team started by gathering technical and business requirements, beginning with the most urgent needs in Legal Department. After concluding the analysis, they recommended an enterprise portal solution based on Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Portal Server 2003. (A portal is an “anchor” Web site or starting point for workers when they connect to the intranet.) Secure and scalable, SharePoint Portal Server 2003 can aggregate SharePoint team sites, information, and applications into a single enterprise portal. Says Brooks: “SharePoint [Portal Server 2003] looked very promising. What stood out were features we simply did not have before: search, alerts, and audience targeting. We felt SharePoint Portal Server [2003] could replace our intranet and take us into an entirely new level of communications that could only benefit Host Marriott. And we knew that Portal Dynamics could help us customize the portal to suit our business needs.”

### **Decision for Microsoft**

Host Marriott considered offerings from Documentum and others, but the case for Microsoft was compelling. For starters, the company was already a “Microsoft shop”. Employees used Microsoft Office 2003 on their desktops, and Host Marriott had previously deployed Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 messaging and collaboration

server, Active Directory directory service, and Live Communications Server 2005, an enterprise-grade real-time communication solution. By migrating to Windows Server™ 2003 operating system with Windows SharePoint Services (a collection of services for Windows Server 2003 used to create team-oriented Web sites for sharing information and fostering collaboration), Host Marriott had the components needed for managing collaboration in ways that were not previously possible. Deploying SharePoint Portal Server 2003 was a logical next step. “Seamless integration with our existing Microsoft technologies, and affordability compared to other options, were simply too attractive to pass up,” says Brooks.

### **Quick Deployment**

Deploying the first portal for Legal Department took less than 3 months. Built-in templates helped the team get up to speed quickly. With minor customization, the home page and team sites soon had the look and feel the team wanted. The team set up document libraries and migrated the first 3,500 documents from shared drives. As the site expands, several thousand more documents will be migrated, enabling Host Marriott to retire or re-use the storage resources for other purposes.

### **Easy to Use**

The 35 Associates in Legal Department needed minimal training before they started using the portal daily to receive important news and organize their work. They enjoy easy connections with their documents and with co-workers, whether working at the office or from a remote location. With a single login (authenticated through Microsoft Active Directory) employees gain access to team sites and document libraries through a user-friendly home page (See Figure 1). After scanning company news and announcements, they can conduct on-line collaboration, subscribe to change alerts,

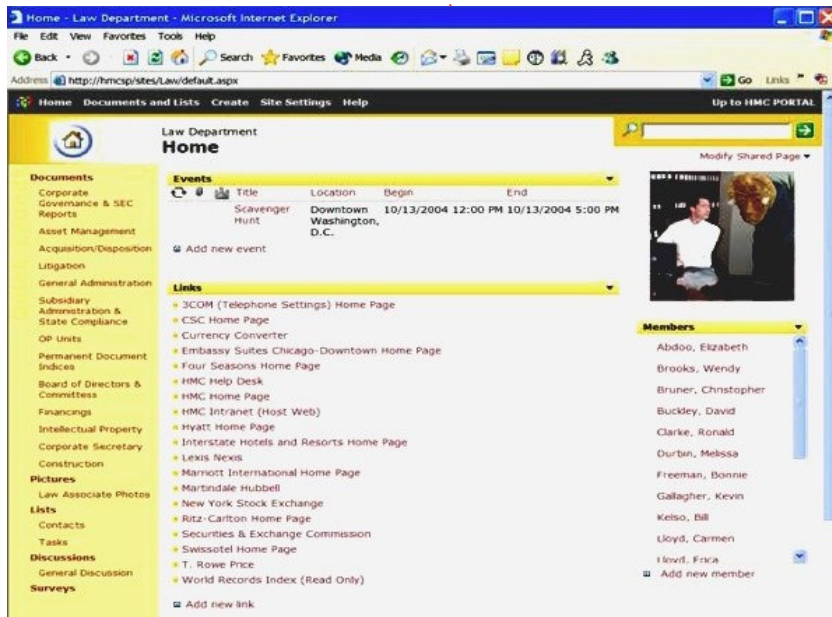


Figure 1. Host Marriott's Legal Department employees gain access to their documents, team sites, and co-workers through their portal home page.

perform advanced full text searches, participate in online discussions, and arrange meetings using shared calendars—none of which were previously possible.

Thanks to tight integration between Office 2003 programs and Windows SharePoint Services, collaboration is very intuitive. Documents can be saved directly to a team site from within Office programs like Microsoft Word 2003, and collaborative workspaces can be set up quickly in Outlook 2003 by specifying that recipients of an attachment be added to a team site. A worker can check out and edit a shared document from the library, blocking others from simultaneously editing the same document. When checked in, the document again becomes available for other contributors. Edits accumulate in a linear, consistent way, simplifying workflow and providing a complete record of each person's contributions. All authorized team members can subscribe to alerts—brief email messages that inform them of changes in a document. Versioning, a feature built into Windows

SharePoint Services and available through the portal, allows roll-back to a previous copy of the document along with a detailed record of the edits to date.

Site administration under SharePoint Portal Server 2003 has simplified. Many operations that previously required IT professional help—including assigning document access rights and managing content—are now done by document owners or team leaders.

### Integrated Document ID

The mandate for unique document identifiers was met by a custom .NET application developed by Portal Dynamics. (Microsoft .NET technology provides developers tools to quickly build and deploy connected solutions with Web services.) Running in the background, the program integrates smoothly with Office 2003 programs and Windows SharePoint Services document libraries. Every new or updated document automatically receives a unique identifier with version number, date, and time. This information is displayed in the document footer. Associates can quickly find a document by ID in SharePoint Portal Server's powerful search engine. And, once printed or displayed, employees can determine at a glance what version of the document they are viewing.

### Automated Document Retention

The portal also supports an automated document retention system. An employee defines the document type when first uploading a file. When the retention deadline approaches, another Portal Dynamics application sends e-mails to the SharePoint site administrator and document owner(s), alerting them that the document will be removed from the system. The program automatically deletes the document on the date specified. This solution eases the burden on Legal and IT professionals, and helps individuals stay in compliance without

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requiring them to memorize retention timetables. “This solution enables us to better enforce Host Marriott’s retention policy, and encourages employees to use SharePoint team sites and libraries rather than the old shared drives.” says Brooks.

## Benefits

### Improved Productivity

Legal Department’s employees are more productive with SharePoint Portal Server 2003. When Associates arrive at their desks, the portal helps them quickly organize their workday and locate information they need to start work. SharePoint Portal Server’s fast and accurate search engine finds information and documents more than twice as fast as before. A majority of respondents to an internal survey listed improved search as the portal’s most compelling feature. “The employees really enjoy the new search capabilities. They can find documents quickly and get to work,” says Brooks.

Smooth integration with Microsoft Office programs means workers need not leave their familiar desktop applications to access documents on team sites. E-mail alerts eliminate the need to repeatedly check file directories to see if a document has changed. When Legal Department Associates edit a printed document, they can quickly compare versions using the integrated document ID number, saving time previously spent verifying which version is more recent. Wendy Brooks summarizes the new portal’s impact on teamwork: “It’s such a remarkable change. We now have a solution that promotes rather than hinders team building and collaboration. Centralized information, powerful search, and easy document management—these are capabilities we simply didn’t have before.”

### Higher Compliance With Less Risk

Complying with document retention and workflow policies is easier now that file distribution is limited and a complete record of contributors and edits is retained. Automated file destruction eliminates the need to memorize retention schedules or search through file shares for outdated documents. As a result, document owners spend an estimated 40 percent less time for on file maintenance, compliance with new Sarbanes-Oxley guidelines is easier, and risks of keeping outdated documents is reduced.

### Streamlined Administration

IT resources have been saved, thanks to more efficient site development and administration. Says Brooks: “From a time and resources perspective, we could not have built this solution in house. Deploying SharePoint [Portal Server 2003] definitely saved us several man-months of professional development time.” Site administration is also simplified because many functions previously done by IT professionals—like setting permissions and managing team membership—are now handled by site owners or team leaders. Because team sites can be set up easily, response time to unplanned business needs is faster by an estimated 20 percent. This has dual benefits: lighter burdens on IT resources and greater sense of ownership by employees. Observes Brooks: “Most administrative tasks should be tied to business processes, not IT processes. And content should be in the hands of authors, not web developers. The portal is helping us fundamentally change the way we work.”

### Cost Savings

Host Marriott estimates total cost of ownership for the first two years to be 60 percent less with SharePoint Portal Server 2003 than with competing solutions. Says Brooks: “Cost was a huge driving factor. Compared with other portal systems we considered, SharePoint Portal Server 2003

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about Portal Dynamics products and services, call (703) 778-3503 or visit the Web site at: [www.portal-dynamics.com](http://www.portal-dynamics.com)

For more information about Host Marriott Inc. products and services, call (240) 744-1000 or visit the Web site at: [www.hostmarriott.com](http://www.hostmarriott.com)

was cost effective, and the benefits of tight integration with Microsoft Office 2003 were very compelling.”

### A Bright Future with Microsoft

Host Marriott will expand SharePoint Portal Server 2003 to the rest of its departments by year-end, starting with Human Resources and Financial Reporting. Higher productivity, improved employee morale, and a robust plan for complying with new regulations position Host Marriott strongly for growth. Wendy Brooks summarizes the company's outlook: “We are extremely pleased with our Microsoft solution. The portal helps our associates manage information smoothly and efficiently, and they enjoy their work much more—it's that simple!”

### Microsoft Office System

Microsoft® Office is the business world's chosen environment for information work that provides the software, servers, and services that help you succeed by transforming information into impact. For more information about Microsoft Office System, go to:

[www.microsoft.com/office/](http://www.microsoft.com/office/)

### SharePoint Portal Server 2003

SharePoint Portal Server 2003 enables enterprises to deploy an intelligent portal that seamlessly connects users, teams and knowledge so that people can leverage relevant information across business processes to help them work more efficiently. For more information about Microsoft SharePoint Products and Technologies, go to:

[www.microsoft.com/sharepoint/default.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/sharepoint/default.asp)

## Software and Services

- Products
  - Microsoft Office 2003 Professional
  - Microsoft Exchange Server 2003
  - Microsoft Office Live Communications Server 2005 Enterprise Edition
  - Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2000
  - Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Enterprise Edition
  - Microsoft Windows XP Professional

- Technologies
  - Microsoft .NET Framework
  - Microsoft Active Directory
  - Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services

## Hardware

- (2) Dell PowerEdge 2850: Application server and database server

## Partners

- Portal Dynamics

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