What Secure Collaboration Means for Luxury Hotel Management Company Oetker Collection

Oetker Collection

Industry:
Hospitality

Deployment Size:
~200

Location:
Europe

Product:
BlackBerry® Workspaces

Website:
www.oetkercollection.com

OETKER COLLECTION

As part of the German-founded Oetker Group, Oetker Collection is a management company responsible for overseeing luxury hotel chains worldwide. Through contracts with the hotel owners, it tackles everything from openings to renovations to staffing and construction. Founded a few years ago to manage a single hotel, Oetker's client list has since grown to include nine luxury properties – both hotels and masterpiece estates – in destinations that include Paris, Jumby Bay Island, and Sao Paulo.

One thing that makes the organization unique is that no two hotels are exactly alike. Each property Oetker Collection manages has a different look and feel, with various suppliers, vendors, and requirements. The only thing each has in common with the others is their elegance, savoir-faire, and understanding of European hospitality traditions.

"We exclusively manage five-star properties known as Masterpiece Hotels," explains Oetker Collection Head of Projects Olivier Bihel. "Every property has its own DNA, and we feel proud and fortunate to host in some of the most splendid, endearing places in the world. Our properties each have their own strong character, brand, and history that must be maintained, and their own set of files that must be kept secure as they're shared both internally and externally."

"Over the course of a project, we share a huge quantity of data with multiple first and third parties," explains Bihel. "Each project has very specific requirements in terms of construction and design, shared exclusively with appointed and pre-approved partners. These might include carpenters, engineers, interior design firms, and numerous other vendors."

"There is also significant documentation associated with each project beyond what we share externally," he continues. "It can be somewhat overwhelming to track."

Initially, Oetker Collection managed the storage and distribution of this documentation through a combination of Dropbox® and a series of webservers. However, as it continued to grow, this arrangement proved both complicated and cumbersome. It quickly became clear that they needed something better.

"Everything was spread out across multiple devices and servers," Bihel recalls. "We had no way to track and control files once they were shared. Not only was this problematic from a security standpoint, but it also made version control difficult – we'd often see multiple copies of the same document during a project's lifespan."

Oetker Collection recognized the need for a centralized collaboration tool that was easy to use, and would allow the organization to consolidate, organize, and control both internal and external documents. The business necessitated a system be put in place to share and track files, both online and offline.

Oetker's main goal was reigning in sharing its data across multiple public cloud platforms where it had little control or ownership. As part of its evaluation process, it briefly considered several competing content collaboration tools. They all proved too difficult to implement, given the project's scope.

Ultimately, it chose BlackBerry® Workspaces for its strong data security and integration with BlackBerry® Dynamics™, which serves as a secure foundation for mobile apps.

A Unique Take on Collaboration

An enterprise-class tool for file storage, sharing, and synchronization, BlackBerry Workspaces provides file-centric security across multiple devices and form factors. With robust tracking and granular file controls, BlackBerry Workspaces allows an organization to protect its files even as they're shared. This is further augmented by easily sorting users into different groups, each one with its own unique permissions.

Oetker Collection has deployed BlackBerry Workspaces to 200 users in its project management arm, who primarily use it to coordinate with vendors, suppliers, and contractors. They have leveraged the platform to great effect in that regard. Rather than being distributed across multiple devices and servers, all of the organization's project and development files are stored in a single library.

"BlackBerry Workspaces has been incredibly useful for Oetker Collection. We rarely have to travel for projects now, instead using the platform to collaborate with contractors, vendors, and suppliers. If I had to assign a value to it, I'd say we spend nearly 30% less time on projects now than we did before the BlackBerry implementation."

- Olivier Bihel
Head of Projects, Oetker Collection

External access permissions for these files are based both on location and company type. For instance, an interior designer working at Le Bristol Paris would have access to different files from one working on The Lanesborough in London, even though the two have a similar role. By arranging files in this way, Oetker Collection achieves several things.

First, it streamlines the sharing of documentation with contractors and vendors. Rather than having to send information via email or deliver it by hand, Oetker Collection can transmit everything digitally. Not only does this enable a much faster response to work requests, but it also ensures that Oetker Collection always retains some degree of control over sensitive files.

Second, it greatly improves productivity and efficiency for both Oetker Collection and partnered organizations. Materials can be accessed from anywhere, and stakeholders can collaborate with ease. This means less time spent traveling and scheduling and more time spent seeing projects through to completion.

"I'm based in Paris, and our Chief Project Development Officer is in South France," explains Bihel. "Prior to deploying BlackBerry Workspaces, we both had to spend a lot of time on the road – attending design presentations, sharing physical documentation, and so on. With BlackBerry Workspaces, we can now handle most of that digitally."

Finally, BlackBerry Workspaces helps eliminate issues with version control. Everyone has access to the same set of documents. This prevents duplication of effort, in addition to eliminating the confusion that comes with having multiple versions of the same document.

"Most of the time in a project like a hotel renovation, people are all working on a file at the same time, but they all have different versions of that file," says Bihel. "That disorganization leads to a lack of efficient management of workstreams. BlackBerry Workspaces reduces that problem."

"Every time a contractor is working on an execution drawing or other critical document, they can upload it directly to BlackBerry Workspaces, making it immediately available to all other stakeholders," Bihel continues. "Everyone's therefore working on the same maps, plans, and drawings. That makes a huge difference."

Currently, one of the properties is working on a new landscape design for one of its gardens. Through BlackBerry Workspaces, Bihel and his team have managed the entire development and design process remotely. Moreover, they've provided the landscape designer, architect, and lighting designer the ability to collaborate and stay in alignment with one another.

Another feature of BlackBerry Workspaces that has been valuable to Oetker Collection is offline access. Particularly in the case of major renovation projects, Wi-Fi isn't always going to be readily available. Through BlackBerry Workspaces, staff can pull up whatever documentation they need on their mobile devices and tablets, even if they lack a network connection.

Not Just a Product – a Partnership

Oetker Collection did not simply deploy BlackBerry Workspaces and call it a day. It set out to seek a partner that would help identify the right model to meet its unique needs – and it found that in BlackBerry. Since deploying BlackBerry Workspaces, the relationship between Oetker Collection and BlackBerry has continued to evolve, expanding to include the Collection's future projects and properties around the globe.

"We have an excellent feedback process in place with BlackBerry," says Bihel. "BlackBerry, for its part, has been incredibly responsive – every time we have a question or comment, they responded within a week or less. There's a strong sense of urgency and that's incredibly valuable to us."

In the near future, Oetker Collection is exploring the possibility of deploying BlackBerry Workspaces to other internal departments. This will equip all users, even those outside project management, with secure access to any files they may need. And that, Bihel believes, will improve both efficiency and productivity throughout the organization.

"We're still fairly early in our deployment, and there are still a few things we'd like to implement," Bihel explains. "We've gotten off to a really good start with the BlackBerry Workspaces platform. I think there's a lot more to come, and we're thrilled to work with BlackBerry."

About BlackBerry

BlackBerry (NYSE: BB; TSX: BB) provides intelligent security software and services to enterprises and governments around the world. The company secures more than 500M endpoints including 150M cars on the road today. Based in Waterloo, Ontario, the company leverages AI and machine learning to deliver innovative solutions in the areas of cybersecurity, safety and data privacy solutions, and is a leader in the areas of endpoint security management, encryption, and embedded systems. BlackBerry's vision is clear — to secure a connected future you can trust.

For more information, visit BlackBerry.com and follow @BlackBerry.

BlackBerry.
Intelligent Security. Everywhere.