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Choice Hotels Partners with Isos Technology to Migrate from Rally to Jira Software

Choice Hotels International, Inc. (NYSE: CHH) is one of the largest and most successful lodging franchisors in the world. Choice Hotels currently franchises more than 7,000 hotels, representing nearly 570,000 rooms, in more than 40 countries and territories. Ranging from limited service to full-service hotels in the upscale, midscale, extended-stay, and economy segments, Choice-branded properties provide business and leisure travelers with a range of high-quality, high-value lodging options throughout the United States and internationally.



The Challenge

Choice Hotels has multiple scrum teams that support a complex ecosystem of products for the company, including custom reservation software, on-premise systems, connections with third-party vendors, a guest loyalty program, guest data, and billing. These engineering and DevOps teams decided to migrate away from Rally, their platform of ten years, due to the expiration of their licenses. They chose Jira Software in Atlassian Cloud Premium to take advantage of cost savings, and integrations with other Atlassian tools that they were already using (on-prem Confluence and Bitbucket).

Although Choice Hotels originally wanted to perform the migration themselves, and had started manually migrating data into Jira, they quickly ran into challenges. There were 15K work items and hundreds of archived and active projects to migrate from Rally into Jira, and Rally's hierarchical structure does not map one-to-one with Jira. Most critically, there was no wiggle room on when Choice Hotels needed to be out of Rally, and with six weeks until the deadline, they realized they needed expert help to achieve the results they wanted in such a short timeframe.

Choice Hotels' sister company had worked with Isos Technology previously, and recommended Isos to the company. After reaching out to several Atlassian solution partners, Choice Hotels ultimately chose Isos because of their competitive pricing, and willingness and flexibility to take on a time-sensitive migration with such short notice.



The Solution

Isos' Atlassian-certified team jumped in and began working with Sean Middlemist, Senior Director of Software Engineering for Choice Hotels, who oversees tools and partner relationships for the company. Isos worked side by side with Choice Hotels' internal team to come up with the main goals for the migration, and create a detailed list of tasks that was updated daily to track progress. To speed up communication, the Isos and Choice Hotels teams had daily stand-ups to coordinate work, resolve action items, and brainstorm solutions for issues as they arose.

The main goal for Choice Hotels was to capture all of the data in Rally and get it into Jira, including work items, fields, projects, and attachments. Using a proprietary migration app, Isos took Choice Hotels' data from Rally, restructured it, and mapped it to Jira. Isos set up the screens, terminology, and structure in Jira to be familiar to users accustomed to working in Rally, and configured the data hierarchy and reporting to look the way Choice Hotels wanted projects and information to roll up. Isos also installed and configured Advanced Roadmaps for Jira as part of the project. Setting up things like metadata, history for field changes, and workflows for Choice Hotels SAFe development practices was not intuitive in Jira out of the box, and required Isos' expertise to get everything configured in a way that worked best for Choice Hotels' processes. And because Choice Hotels had been manually migrating work into a Jira proof of concept instance for six months prior to engaging with Isos, there was a significant amount of project reconciliation that had to be done to fit the structure Isos set up.

Once the data was mapped and the Jira infrastructure was configured, Isos pushed the data into a test environment, and Choice Hotels conducted three days of user acceptance testing (UAT), a significantly shorter test window than usually allotted for migrations. After the initial test, the data was quickly pushed into the production environment, and Isos worked with the Choice Hotels' team for several weeks after the final cutover to provide guidance on best practices.

Results and Outcomes

Successful Migration

From the beginning, Isos was transparent with Choice Hotels that there was significant risk involved with migrating quickly, and that it was going to be tough to hit their deadline. Despite the challenging circumstances, Isos and Choice Hotels worked side by side as partners to make the migration happen. Together, they were able to get the data needed out of Rally and into Jira in time, and the project came in under budget by 20%.

Tool Adoption

A majority of people at Choice Hotels had used Rally, and only Rally, before the migration to Jira, so there was a significant amount of change management that needed to take place. Stakeholders and superusers in Rally had some familiarity with Jira due to Choice Hotels' proof of concept, but the speed at which they needed to migrate left them with gaps in training. For the first few weeks after migrating, user groups led by team members who had used Jira before met daily to work through issues and help everyone get up to speed using the tool. Three months into using Jira, users felt more comfortable and were coming up with suggestions for improvement. Choice Hotels also meets regularly with their sister company that has been using Jira for longer to review lessons learned and best practices.

Access to Critical Data

A main beneficiary of the migration to Jira is Choice Hotels' project management office (PMO), a group that is responsible for tracking and reporting on how initiatives are going. Isos created custom views and dashboards for them, and they are now able to get the information and insights they need, like sprint summaries, out of Jira to better understand the work being done and make informed decisions.

Increased Functionality

Choice Hotels is taking advantage of functionality in Jira that wasn't available to them in Rally. Jira's integration with their company wiki (built using Atlassian's Confluence) streamlined project documentation for their scrum masters by automating data transfers into the wiki and eliminating extra steps needed to create a wiki page. They also found that tracking bugs and workflows are better in Jira than in Rally. Next, Choice Hotels plans to migrate their on-prem Confluence and Bitbucket instances to Atlassian Cloud, which will open up even more integrations once all of their tools are operating in the cloud.



Isos understood the urgency we had and our very aggressive timeline. They got the right people working on the project at a really early stage to get the groundwork done, which was key to the success of the project.

—Sean Middlemist, Sr. Director, Software Engineering/
Guest & Loyalty, Choice Hotels International

About Isos Technology:

Isos Technology is a world-class consulting services provider that helps organizations become the best version of themselves through technology, people, and practices. As an Atlassian Platinum Solution Partner with ITSM, Cloud, and Agile at Scale specializations, we thrive on solving your toughest business agility, service management, and Atlassian lifecycle challenges, while accelerating business transformation and outcomes. Founded in 2005, Isos became a portfolio company of The Acacia Group in 2022, with the original founders continuing to drive the mission and strategy for Isos going forward. Isos has since cemented its status as one of the largest Platinum Solution Partners in the Atlassian ecosystem. Headquartered in Tempe, Arizona, and with offices across the U.S., Isos has been recognized as an Atlassian Partner of the Year in the ITSM, Enterprise, and Services categories for the last six out of seven years, an Inc. 5000 Fastest-Growing Private Company, and a ClOReview Most Promising Agile Consulting Company.

For more information, visit isostech.com.

Project Snapshot

- Choice Hotels decided to move from Rally to Jira Software to take advantage of cost savings and Jira's integration with Confluence and Bitbucket.
- The project was challenging because they needed to migrate 15K work items and hundreds of projects into Jira in a tight timeframe of six weeks.
- After realizing they couldn't do it themselves, they brought Isos Technology in to work side by side with their team to extract, map, and migrate the necessary data.
- In addition to migrating data, the project involved configuring the terminology and data hierarchy in Jira, and creating custom views and dashboards for reporting.
- Working together, Choice Hotels and Isos were able to complete the migration on time and ensure key users had access to the data they needed.
- Choice Hotels now benefits from features and functionality in Jira that weren't available to them previously, and integrations that save their scrum teams time.



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