Building Differentiated Hotel Brand in Romania

Cisco Borderless Network helps Hotel INTERNATIONAL Sinaia boost operational efficiency and uplift leisure bookings by 20 to 30 percent

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Hotel INTERNATIONAL Sinaia

Industry: Hospitality

Location: Romania

Number of Employees: 49

Challenge
- Upgrade guest services and back office systems to latest international standards
- Meet demand for high-speed Internet access, Wi-Fi, and conferencing
- Increase booking rates among customers checking in for leisure and relaxation

Solution
- Cisco Borderless Network for secure connectivity and access to hotel services including Cisco Unified Communications, IPTV, and Video Surveillance

Results
- Uplift of 20 to 30 percent in leisure customer bookings
- Professional conference benefits from collaboration and live video streaming
- Platform for helping enable growth and expansion to all major cities

Challenge

Today's travelers expect to stay in hotels that have the same or better technology than they have at home or in the office. Increasingly hotel satisfaction ratings and repeat business are being decided by factors such as high-speed Internet access, wider choices of entertainment, customizable room controls, and secure wireless connectivity. This trend is creating a parallel need for back office systems that positively contribute to guest comfort and convenience.

The Hotel INTERNATIONAL Sinaia understands these challenges more than most. Situated high in the Carpathian Mountains in Romania, it strives to offer guests the best of everything. Equipped with a spa, three restaurants, and extensive convention facilities, the hotel is a natural choice for events, conferences, and holidaymakers who enjoy winter sports in Prahova Valley.

Part of the recently launched INTERNATIONAL Hotels Group, it's brand managers see Hotel INTERNATIONAL Sinaia as the starting point for a new chain of Romanian premium facilities. Delivering the best guest experience possible was seen as critical to that ambition, both in terms of staying ahead of the competition and creating a replicable model for expansion.

"We aim to offer a five-star experience in a four-star hotel," says Hotel INTERNATIONAL Sinaia marketing manager, Marius Vanatoru. "Yet it was difficult to do that with an outdated analog phone system, unreliable cable TV, and a lack of high-speed Internet or Wi-Fi services." The plan was to enhance the hotel's appeal for both business delegates and visitors checking in for rest and relaxation.

Solution

At a time when much of Romania's hospitality sector was cutting costs, the Hotel INTERNATIONAL Sinaia decided to take a more holistic IT-led approach. Initial discussions with its IT integration partner Probitas confirmed a need for the best available technology, along with an infrastructure that would be future compatible and that would allow new services to be added affordably and quickly.

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Marketing Manager
Hotel INTERNATIONALSinaia

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Hotel INTERNATIONALSinaia

"After talking to our partner and doing some research of our own, we knew that only a Cisco solution could deliver what we wanted," says Vanatoru. Based on a concept called Cisco® Connected Hotel, this provides a platform for integrating and delivering hotel services in the safest and most effective way possible: wired, wirelessly, or remotely.

The foundation is a Cisco Borderless Network. Built specifically to deal with challenging video and bring-your-own-device (BYOD) environments, it features a 1Gbps core of Cisco Catalyst® 2960 and 3750 Series Switches, which work alongside a Unified Wireless Network made up of 49 Cisco Aironet® 1141 Series Access Points and a Cisco 5508 Wireless Controller. Network security, a key concern for the hotel industry, is provided by the Cisco ASA 5500 Series Adaptive Security Appliance.

The hotel has deployed Cisco Unified Communications Manager, providing feature-rich Cisco Unified IP Phones in guest rooms and to staff. Safety and security have also been enhanced. "We consolidated 15 Cisco IP Surveillance Cameras onto one system, running on Cisco Video Surveillance Manager software, giving us all-round visibility and security inside and outside the building," says Vanatoru.

Cisco Connected Hotel also supports IPTV services in rooms and digital signage in public areas.

Results

Hotel INTERNATIONAL Sinaia has achieved landmark status in the Romanian hospitality industry by becoming the first hotel in the country to offer IP telephony coupled with secure wireless networking. "Our Cisco Borderless Network design made it simple to add BYOD capability, a concept that was still in its infancy when we started preparing our plans," say INTERNATIONAL Hotels Group officials. Having this new competitive edge is helping to attract more business users and regular guests, while leisure customer booking rates have risen by between 20 and 30 percent.

The solution has helped enable the hotel to fulfill all its aspirations. "When our business guests use a conference room, we want them to receive a highly professional experience," says Vanatoru. "At a recent global cardiology convention, for example, we were able to use Cisco video technology to stream a live heart operation being carried out in Italy. No other hotel in our region could have done this."

Operational efficiency has been transformed. Improvements include speedier check-in and check-out. Real time visibility of purchasing allows guests to keep better track of their finances. Routine processes, such as reporting mini-bar usage or checking on the cleanliness of rooms, have been streamlined. Using the new IT environment to replace and automate time consuming manual work practices has also helped to reduce staff costs.

The solution has brought other financial benefits. "We no longer have to pay a service provider to create personalized guest services," says Vanatoru. "Should a client require specific Internet speeds, for example, we can manage this request internally." Moreover, leveraging the IT investment has brought forward the owners' vision for the business. A second hotel in a major Romanian city, Iasi, is set to open shortly, with a third in the capital city of Bucharest about to undergo extensive modernization in 2013.

Marius Vanatoru sums up: "With Cisco, we have a proven approach and service standard for all our hotels. By replicating this success, our aim is to have a hotel in every major city in Romania within seven years."

For More Information

To learn more about the Cisco architectures and solutions described in this case study, please go to:

www.cisco.com/go/hospitality
www.cisco.com/go/borderless
www.cisco.com/go/collaboration

Product List

Routing and Switching
- Cisco Catalyst 2960, 3560 and 3750 Series Switches
- Cisco 3945 Router

Wireless
- Cisco Aironet 1141 Series Access Points
- Cisco 5508 Wireless Controller

Network Security
- Cisco ASA 5500 Series Adaptive Security Appliance

Physical Security
- Cisco Unified IP Cameras 2611, 2630, and 2935
- Cisco Video Surveillance Manager

Unified Communications
- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7921
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 6911
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 6901
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7945

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