

Australian Entertainment Complex Provides World-Class Guest Experience

Crown Melbourne Limited uses unified communications to differentiate guest rooms and contact centers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CROWN MELBOURNE LIMITED

- Hospitality
- Melbourne, Australia
- 5700 employees

CHALLENGE

- Differentiate guest experience
- Streamline hotel processes for greater efficiency

SOLUTION

- Replaced private branch exchange systems with Unified Communications
- Created centralized customer contact center using Unified Contact Center Express
- Engaged NetStar Australia, a Cisco Certified Gold Partner, to integrate Unified Communications with third-party hospitality applications

RESULTS

- Created unique in-room experience
- Enabled guests to easily request services in preferred language
- Consolidated three contact center locations to one

Challenge

The Crown Entertainment Complex is the premier facility of its type in Melbourne and is recognized as one of the largest and most diverse in the southern hemisphere. Covering the equivalent of two city blocks, Crown's integrated facilities feature Crown Casino, with 350 tables and 2500 gaming machines; Crown Towers, Crown Promenade, and Crown Metropal (open mid-2010) hotels; the Palladium ballroom; more than 50 restaurants and bars; an extensive collection of international designer boutiques, 14 cinemas, two nightclubs, a live entertainment theatre, and Crown's Capital Golf Club. The complex attracts more than 16 million visitors every year. Crown Towers was voted Top Hotel, Australia / Pacific at the prestigious 2007 U.S. Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards. Crown Promenade Hotel has won the Australian Tourism Award for best deluxe accommodation.

When planning the AU\$65 million upgrade to Crown Towers in 2009, hotel management sought creative ways to differentiate its rooms. Crown wanted to extend its vision beyond remodeled bathrooms and high-end finishes to the actual guest experience. "In-room technology has become a major differentiator in top hotels," says Ric Lamb,

Executive General Manager for Management Information Systems, Crown Melbourne. "Crown decided to equip the rooms with the very latest communications technology to create an even more impressive experience and 'wow' factor."

When originally built, each hotel had its own private branch exchange (PBX) system. Crown wanted to replace the PBX systems with a centralized unified communications system that shared the same Cisco® IP network the hotel uses for business applications. Combining voice and data on the same network would enable hotel guests to use in-room IP phones to view information such as weather, restaurant options, flight information, and more. Crown also wanted to offer a high-quality contact center experience to people who called its reservations center or requested services such as housekeeping or room service.

Solution

After evaluating unified communications solutions from three leading vendors, including the existing PBX provider, Crown chose Cisco Unified Communications. "Many of our guests are businesspeople, and they are already comfortable with Cisco Unified IP phones because they use them at work," says Mr. Lamb. "The hospitality applications that Crown wanted to provide to guests are available on Cisco Unified IP phones. Crown's experienced IT staff have the skills to manage Cisco equipment. And we like the idea of having a single point of contact for our network and communications system."

NetStar Australia, a Cisco Gold Certified Partner, deployed Cisco Unified Communications and integrated it with hospitality applications from FCS Computer Systems, a member of the Cisco Developer Technology Program. So far, NetStar has installed more than 2100 Cisco Unified IP phones in Crown Tower guestrooms and Crown administration offices, and will have installed 7500 when the project is complete. During the transition, Cisco Unified Communications is interoperating with Crown's original PBX systems.

Each suite has at least two phones, a Cisco Unified IP Phone 7975 with a color touch screen on the desk, and a Cisco Unified IP Phone 7906 in the bedroom. The largest suites have up to 21 IP phones. "Guests can just touch the screen to request room service, call housekeeping, view local weather or weather in their hometown, check flight schedules, view restaurant and retail store information, and more," says Mr. Lamb. Guests can personalize the phone by saving speed-dial numbers and tagging webpages for quick access. The Crown marketing department worked with NetStar Australia to create attractive menus with a look and feel that reinforces the Crown brand. Phone menus appear in the guest's preferred language, including Chinese.

NetStar Australia also deployed Cisco Unified Contact Center Express for Crown's guest services and reservations contact centers. When agents receive a call, they can see the guest's name and the requested service, such as housekeeping, on their PCs. The same screen displays a staff directory so that agents can just click to transfer the call if needed.

Results

Enhanced Contact Center Experience

In most hotels, calls for extra towels or room service, for example, are routed to different hotel departments. Each department needs enough communications lines and employees to answer all calls during peak calling times. Crown eliminates the guesswork by routing all calls to a centralized contact center with 40 trained agents. Cisco Unified Contact Center Express, which is integrated with the property management software, automatically routes calls to an agent who speaks the language the guest indicated during check in. Contact center managers can generate reports on demand with up-to-the-minute information on performance metrics, including the time needed to meet each customer request.

Streamlined Reservations Process

In the past, Crown's Reservations Department had to continually check telephones, emails, and the fax machine to process new reservation requests. Now, with Cisco Unity® Unified Messaging, all types of messages appear in one place, the email inbox, saving time for agents and helping them provide better customer service.

Differentiated Guest Experience

Guests have responded positively to the Cisco Unified IP phones, and are especially enthusiastic about the touch screen menus that provide convenient information about hotel restaurants, retail stores, and other attractions and amenities.

"Crown continues to strive to be the best entertainment complex in Australia, and giving our valued hotel guests the benefit of the latest communications technology right in their rooms helps us achieve that goal," says Ann Peacock, General Manager of Public Relations, Crown Melbourne.

Efficient Business Processes

Cisco Unified Communications is also streamlining the hotel's business processes. For example, when housekeepers finish preparing a room for a new guest, they press buttons on the room phone to indicate that the room is ready. NetStar Australia set up the system so that this information is automatically transferred to the property management system. Immediate updates enable the hotel to make rooms available sooner to guests who arrive early.

Back-office employees like the time-saving features of Cisco Unified Communications, such as the ability to view a list of missed calls, click to call back, and view, playback, and forward voicemail messages from the email inbox.

Simplified IT Infrastructure

Before the upgrade, providing the standard two phones, two televisions, and Internet access in a guest room would have required five cables. "Now voice, television, and Internet access are all provided over the same Cisco IP network, reducing cabling requirements throughout the hotel property," says Mr. Lamb.

Crown also anticipates reduced operational costs because the hotel no longer needs to use phone technicians to perform telephone extension moves, adds, and changes. Now anyone can move a Cisco Unified IP phone by disconnecting from the old location and connecting it in the new location. This capability is expected to save significant time during set up for conventions.

"Crown prides itself on customer service and value. Cisco has enabled us to offer guests the very latest in technology, both in their rooms and through their contact center experience."

—Ric Lamb, Executive General Manager, Management Information Systems, Crown Melbourne

Next Steps

In mid-2010, Crown will extend Cisco Unified Communications to the Crown Promenade Hotel and Crown Metropoli (open mid-2010). These three hotels will offer guests the highest density of hotel rooms in Australia, and administration offices will share the same servers for IP telephony, the contact center, and unified messaging.

NetStar Australia is currently implementing another application from FCS Communications to further enhance the guest experience. When guests touch a menu option on the Cisco Unified IP phone to request an extra blanket or have their baggage brought to the lobby, for example, the contact center will automatically page the appropriate person. After fulfilling the request, the employee will close the request on an IP phone. If the request is not fulfilled within a defined amount of time, the request will be escalated.

Mr. Lamb concludes, "Crown prides itself on customer service and value. Cisco Unified Communications enables us to offer guests the very latest in technology, both in their rooms and through their contact center experience."

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Unified Communications, visit: www.cisco.com/go/unifiedcommunications

To join conversations and share best practices about collaboration, visit: www.cisco.com/go/joinconversation

For More Information on Crown Melbourne Limited

To find out more about Crown Melbourne Limited, visit: www.crowncasino.com

PRODUCT LIST

Network Systems

- Cisco 3845 Integrated Services Routers
- Cisco Catalyst® 6500 and 3750 Series Switches

Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7975G and 7906 for hotel guest rooms
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7962G, 7942G, 7911G, and 7906 for administration, contact center, and reservations departments
- Cisco Unified Contact Center Express
- Cisco Unity Unified Messaging
- Cisco Unified Presence
- Cisco Fax Server
- Cisco Email Interaction Manager
- Cisco VG224 and VG248 Voice Gateways

Security

- Cisco 5520 Adaptive Security Appliances



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