

# Case Study

Enhanced call handling solution strengthens brand and streamlines operations



*Occupancy rates are well up while we have been able to reduce overhead costs.*

Group Operations Manager



## The Issues

This growing hotel chain was looking to strengthen its brand and increase room occupancy rates by introducing a central bookings number. A number of acquisitions had introduced a variety of numbers for incoming calls for hotel bookings and overheads to support personnel at each location to handle calls was a overhead they wished to reduce,.

A number of the smaller establishments in the chain didn't have dedicated full-time staff for handling booking enquiries. The company knew it wasn't capturing all prospective customers but had no idea how many calls were remaining unanswered due to staff being unavailable or a lack of capacity on the lines. There was also a perceived lack of professionalism in the way some calls were being answered.

Aware of the increasingly competitive marketplace and difficult economic outlook, the company was looking for ways to enhance customer service whilst increasing revenues and reducing costs.

## The Benefits

- ✓ Single non-geographic telephone number for all bookings
- ✓ Calls answered promptly in a professional manner
- ✓ Enhanced efficiencies through a more holistic approach
- ✓ Option of speaking with someone at a specific hotel
- ✓ Positive customer feedback

# The Solution

A new non-geographic telephone line handles booking enquiries for all hotels in the chain. Calls to existing numbers are routed to the new centralised number. Calls are answered by an automated service, carefully and sympathetically designed in consultation with hotel staff.

Most of us have suffered the frustration of automated call answering systems that seem to take us endlessly round complex menu structures and make it virtually impossible to speak with a real person! This hotel chain invested time and effort in the development and implementation of a carefully designed call handling strategy, that takes account of factors such as call volumes, types of calls and anticipated responses. The solution also encompasses an element of automation to address standard information such as the hotel's location and to yield very significant benefits for the hotels and their guests alike.

Calls are routed appropriately based on time of day, season and call volume. During busy periods, calls can be distributed based on call volumes between sites, ensuring call answering is swift and efficient. During quiet periods, calls can be routed to where resource is available, reducing staffing requirements and ensuring calls are answered 24 x 7.

If calls are held in a queue, 'Comfort' announcements are played to reassure callers they are still connected and to promote any current offers or special events. Callers are given the option to break out of the queue at any time and leave a voice message. All customer service agents are immediately alerted by email when a new message is awaiting follow-up.

Reporting on the call handling activities is being used to plan further changes to the lines used and the longer term plan is to move from today's ISDN lines to SIP Trunks to increase flexibility and scalability.



# The Benefits

The new inbound call handling system has provided cost savings related to staff productivity and hours worked as call handling at non peak times is now distributed between the sites.

All calls are now answered within defined periods established by management and monitored accordingly and a short welcome message confirms to the caller that they are through to the right place.

The hotel chain are also experiencing benefits in greater flexibility of call handling shared between hotels to cover peak periods.

Overhead costs have been cut since the number of ISDN channels required to handle inbound calls has reduced by queuing calls 'in the cloud' rather than in the on-site PBX.

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