

LASSETERS HOTEL CASINO+SHORETEL

Lasseters Hotel Casino hits the jackpot with ShoreTel Unified Communications



Planned expansion prompts telephony evaluation

Lasseters was facing two challenges as part of a planned expansion. Its existing PABX had become expensive to maintain and would not scale. The hotel could put in an additional PABX or replace the system completely.

Meet the telephony needs of a major property expansion

Lasseters is a 140-room hotel, an international-standard casino, and an adjoining convention center that caters to events for more than 1,000 people. Lasseters was planning an expansion that included an additional 65 accommodation rooms, a commercial gym, a fully equipped day spa branded the Golden Door Day Spa Alice Springs,

additional gaming machines and table games, and a VIP gaming room.

Lasseters' existing PABX was expensive to maintain and could not scale to meet the additional telephony needs of the expanded hotel complex. "We had two options," explains Daniel Davis, ICT manager, Lasseters Hotel Casino. "We could put in an additional PABX or replace the system completely."

Lasseters quickly decided against installing an additional PABX, instead opting for a complete replacement of the telephony system with an IP-based unified communications (UC) solution. "Moving to IP telephony made a lot of sense. We already had an IP infrastructure in place, so it was going to be a lot easier for us to manage an IP telephony system, and we wouldn't need to install any additional cabling," says Davis.

Challenges:

With an aging, unstable, unscalable, and expensive-to-maintain PABX system, and a significant expansion of its operations planned, Lasseters Hotel Casino was facing a complete replacement of its telephony environment.

ShoreTel Solution:

The UC solution deployed at Lasseters comprised voice switches and ShoreTel Director, providing a single web-based management interface for all voice applications. Handsets included the IP230, IP265, and IP655 phones, together with ShoreTel Communicator with Professional and Operator Access.

ShoreTel Benefits:

- 50 percent cost savings
- Enhanced hotel guest experience
- Increased staff productivity
- Lower TCO and support costs
- Ability to maintain, manage, and expand the system in-house

Davis and his team undertook extensive research on the different options available in the market, including hybrid PABX and managed solutions, from companies including Cisco, Avaya, Panasonic, and CrossPoint, and concluded that ShoreTel's UC solution provided the best option for Lasseters, most notably when it came to comparing total cost of ownership (TCO) over the life of the system.

"When we completed the analysis, we determined that ShoreTel provided us with a future-proof, well-supported system with many advanced features to allow the business to grow and enable employees to work more efficiently. The ShoreTel system also provided large savings over the life of the system, based on my TCO calculations, when compared to the other systems we considered," explains Davis.

A highly available and redundant UC solution with Web-based management

After a period of project design and planning, the implementation was completed in just one week, with a smooth cutover from the old telephony environment. Since implementation, Lasseters has not experienced any downtime with the ShoreTel system nor with the integration of the UC environment with the hotel's property management system (PMS).

Lasseters uses the MICROS Opera PMS, and its integration with the previous telephony system caused a lot of instability. The ShoreTel system interfaces with Lasseters' PMS via DuVoice, which allows the PMS to interact with the phone system, including guest check-in and check-out, guest messages, room cleaning, wake-up calls, and call billing.

"We had real issues with downtime on our old phone system, which was often related to the PMS interface. With our old telephony environment, we had no granular control of permissions, and the PMS interface had the potential to disable all of our administration phones. With the ShoreTel system, we have much more granular control of the PMS interface, a much more stable integration between the two systems, and a simpler and more personalized way of managing our rooms and our guests," says Davis.

Increased Functionality

The ShoreTel unified communications system has allowed Lasseters to bring together a set of traditionally disparate systems to increase workplace efficiency and staff availability, integrating the phone system's voicemail and call control features into Microsoft Outlook.

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Daniel Davis, ICT Manager
Lasseters Hotel Casino

For example, Lasseters staff can "click to call" on their contact's phone number or transfer calls from their desktop, and voicemail appears as an email message and can be played back either from the user's computer or handset. Users are also able to log in to any phone and have their extension "follow" them.

Additionally, Lasseters' reservation team has taken advantage of queue management in the ShoreTel Communicator with Professional Access client to ensure a better customer service and management of calls during peak times. The ShoreTel system's reporting tools have given management greater insight into peak periods, enabling improved resource scheduling to meet demand.

Lasseters has also deployed IP Phone 655 handsets in its Superior Suites. The 655 handset provides guests with a premium experience, with support for rich applications such as in-room ordering, setting wake-up calls, and hotel

ShoreTel Success Story

information. ShoreTel is developing an application for Lasseters for the 655 handset, which integrates with the hotel's PMS to provide this rich functionality and a "wow" experience for guests in the hotel's Superior Suites.

ShoreTel delivers an easy-to-manage system that cuts support costs in half

The biggest benefit of the new ShoreTel system has been the ease of management of the environment. "Our support costs are half what they used to be," says Davis. "We can now do 95 percent of the administration ourselves. In the past, we had to get in a contractor to do everything from basic moves to adds and changes."

ShoreTel provided the training on-site to Lasseters' IT staff during installation, which covered all aspects of system administration, including MACDs (moves, adds, changes, and deletes), provisioning additional extensions, and changing workgroups and routing.

Lasseters has the peace of mind of a five-year support contract on its ShoreTel system, providing 24x7 technical support from ShoreTel, as well as hardware maintenance and software assurance, which allows Lasseters to upgrade to the latest software versions over the life of the system.

"Now, with the planned expansion of the hotel and casino complex, we will be largely self-sufficient in terms of telephony, and there are no technical barriers to face. Given that the ShoreTel system scales to 20,000 users, we're not even scratching the surface when we deploy additional handsets," concludes Davis.

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ShoreTel. Brilliantly simple business communications.

ShoreTel, Inc. (NASDAQ: SHOR) is a leading provider of brilliantly simple IP phone systems and unified communications solutions powering today's always-on workforce. Its flexible communications solutions for on-premises, cloud and hybrid environments eliminate complexity, reduce costs and improve productivity.

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