

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



ABOUT HAND PICKED HOTELS

Type: Hotel, Hospitality

Location: UK

Configuration: Mitel 3300 IP
Communications Platform (ICP),
Mitel Contact Center Solution

Website: www.handpickedhotels.co.uk

CUSTOMER NEEDS

- Integrate telephony with back office systems
- Network individual hotels together
- Improve customer service with new contact centre

“The skill based routing is very useful this enables me to route basic requests such as booking a bedroom to a new agent and to route a call for our loyalty club or the conference facilities to an experienced agent. Therefore ensuring that the caller speaks to an agent, who is qualified to deal with their request.”

— Ailsa Hart, Contact Centre Manager,
Hand Picked Hotels

Hand Picked Hotels Step Up Customer Service With Mitel IP Solution

Hand Picked Hotels is a privately owned and managed hotel group created with a portfolio of 17 fine country house hotels throughout the UK and the Channel Islands. Its aim is to be at the forefront of a renaissance in fine British hospitality offering superior customer service. The group seeks to create an atmosphere in which guests are encouraged to feel at home. The buildings are all large architecturally stunning properties but no one will ever find themselves tiptoeing around the corridors intimidated by the imposing grandeur of the building. They encourage guests to kick off their shoes and enjoy themselves.

Hand Picked Hotels recently went through a major investment programme spending 80 million pounds on the portfolio to ensure that all aspects of the hotels were of an exceptional standard. The investment programme not only included a complete revamp of the interiors but also the company ensured that they had the latest technology to deliver leading customer service, which proved challenging in providing broadband to remote rural areas.

Ken Arkley, Commercial Director, knew it was time for the Hotel Group to move to an IP telephony solution, “Hand Picked Hotels has used a Mitel® telephone system for a number of years and we have been so impressed with the system we decided to stick with Mitel. The reseller Hotel Telephone Maintenance advised us of the benefits of an IP solution, we could roll out the IP capability of each hotel at our own pace and did not have to rip out existing systems which is very cost effective.”

Currently four hotels are operating on pure IP telephony and Ken and his team plan to roll it out to the remaining hotels in the next five years. One of the main objectives for moving to an IP solution was that the telephony could integrate with the hotels back office systems and the decision was taken to implement a Central Reservations Office (CRO) using the Mitel Contact Centre Solution.



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SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- Mitel 3300 IP Communications Platform (ICP)
- Mitel Contact Center Solution

RESULTS

- Contact centre enabled the manager to plan for busy periods to meet high volumes of calls
- Pre-recorded messages are played to callers who are waiting in a queue informing them of latest offers
- Skilled based routing allowing the manager to route different levels of calls through to the correct agent
- Increased call handling resulting in improved customer service
- Mitel IP solution integrates with back office systems

Improving Customer Service

Previously the group didn't have a contact centre solution and experienced problems with call handling, such as dropped and missed calls, and with limited knowledge of how many calls were taken and missed, they also couldn't tell how productive the agents were. In order to meet the customer service goals it was vital that Hand Picked Hotels addressed these problems by deploying a contact centre.

Hand Picked Hotels prides itself on maintaining the country house hotels' identity and individuality by dealing with reservation calls for each hotel personally as a priority when a caller calls the hotel directly. However, if the staffing levels do not permit this during busy periods or outside of peak hours then the calls are forwarded directly to the Central Reservations Office.

The CRO call distribution system also allows for quick and easy replacement of queuing messages so keeping potential guests interested by providing up to date information to the callers. It allows callers to dial out of the queue, to leave a message for brochure requests.

"We recently promoted a winter offer on the hotels offering them a reduced price for a bedroom, dinner, champagne, canapés plus an upgrade and needless to say we were very busy. The solution gives us the functionality to forecast and plan for busy periods ensuring that we can meet the high demand in calls and deliver an exceptional service from the start of the guests experience with the hotel," commented Ailsa Hart, contact centre manager, Hand Picked Hotels.

The contact centre is based in the Stable Block at the Crathorne Hall Hotel in North Yorkshire with 15 agents working full and part time.

"The Mitel Contact Centre has made a huge difference, I can now manage calls more effectively which of course improves our customer service. A major benefit of the Mitel contact centre is that the team can see the presence of all the members, so we can see if someone is on a call or on a break. This information assists with the management of the team and also eradicates the need for an ugly wallboard, which often adds unnecessary pressure to the working environment," states Ailsa.

Calls and emails come into the contact centre to book bedrooms for any of the 17 hotels and also to book conference facilities and for the hotel's loyalty programme The Club.

ABOUT HTM

Hotel Telephone Maintenance Limited (HTM) was formed with the sole aim of providing a focused telecommunications service to the UK and Eire hospitality markets. Our vision is to be a leader in the UK market by ensuring that the services provided meet the hotel's own quality standards promised to their guests, 24/7.

"The skill based routing is very useful this enables me to route basic requests such as booking a bedroom to a new agent and to route a call for our loyalty club or the conference facilities to an experienced agent. Therefore ensuring that the caller speaks to an agent, who is qualified to deal with their request," said Ailsa.

The contact centre at Crathorne Hall Hotel is not the usual contact centre surroundings; the team is based at an idyllic country house so you would expect staff retention to be higher than the norm.

However, Ailsa states that it is critical to motivate staff to increase their performance and morale.

"We have a very open culture in the contact centre and encourage two way communication between the agents and the management team, we want the agents to provide us with feedback so we can improve areas. Yes, Crathorne Hall Hotel is an exceptional place to work but it is still very important to motivate the staff by running internal incentives such as by offering additional bonuses for room upgrades."

Integrates with Back office systems

The HTM solution uses the Mitel 3300 ICP and SX-2000 technology platforms to integrate the Meteor SE voicemail and wake-up system to ensure the hotels have reliable and trackable wake-up calls provided for the guests. Along, with accurate call logging facilities provided over the Internet with simple and easy web access to staff requiring access as required. The flexibility of the Mitel technology has enabled the use of additional Meteor services across the estate, so allowing Head Office staff to track telephone usage, revenue, and costs within the group, drilling data and reporting down to a particular Hotel and Guest if necessary. The benefit of such technology is that it enables HTM to use Mitel as an active ongoing technology management tool, investigating the usage on telephone lines and actively managing the system to best meet guest and Hand Picked Hotels business needs.

Working with HTM allows Hand Picked Hotels to use a single partner to provide all of their Guest Communications from Cabling Services, Telephones, the Mitel Telephone Systems, Call Accounting, Guest Wakeups, Voicemail, to Guest Internet Services – providing a single point of contact for support. This is only achieved by having a core Mitel technology platform upon which new and legacy equipment or applications can be added.

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