**Guest Satisfaction Not a Gamble at Tropicana Resort & Casino with Help of GuestWare***Guest Response Software Streamlines Central Dispatch, Work Order Processes*LAS VEGAS—It is hard to believe that a seemingly simple change can make such a great improvement in guest satisfaction and operating efficiency but that is what happened at the Tropicana Resort & Casino in August 2004. It was then that the Las Vegas hotel did what some in the industry consider innovative and cutting edge; they implemented a new operating model and software tool for processing guest requests. Using GuestWare, the hotel automated the manual process for handling in-house guest requests and maintenance work orders.

Before GuestWare, the thousands of request calls generated by guests each month went directly to the front desk, engineering or housekeeping departments. Imagine the challenge of having to handle this volume of calls at a 1,878-room property. Also imagine these requests coming to the front desk during peak check-in time. Which guest takes priority? Tropicana’s answer: They should not have to choose one guest over another.

Aside from the dramatic improvement in service quality, the guest response process change was transparent to the guest. Unlike some hotels that change the face plate on the guest phone with a hotline button and a fancy name, “Guests think they are calling the individual department,” says Rita Martin director of operations. “But all housekeeping, engineering and front desk-related calls come to one area where the staff is focused on providing consistent and reliable service.”

**GuestWare Automates Tracking Process**In addition to the challenge with the decentralized work flow, the previous manual process for tracking requests and work orders provided no accountability or efficient means for follow-up. GuestWare automated and streamlined that process. Like any new system, end user adoption was critical for success in the call center. Agents soon realized logging the call into GuestWare is faster than writing it down and provides huge benefits for dispatching, retrieval and follow-up. The entry screen with PMS interface (LMS by Agilysys) requires only two fields to be entered—the room number and request type which has top 10 or quick menus.

Tropicana chose to stick with two-way radios for communication although they are considering GuestWare’s two-way text messaging to further automate the dispatch process. The call monitor screen displays each call with color-coded elapse time and reminders when calls are overdue. Calls are closed out in GuestWare immediately upon resolution except for escalated calls which are left open for follow-up calls with the guest. Special attention or compensation may be required and tracked in GuestWare to ensure the guest is satisfied.

“We have experienced a substantial improvement in response time thanks to GuestWare,” says Martin, “GuestWare has improved guest satisfaction dramatically.”

**Lost Guest Calls, Overdue Work Orders Eliminated**GuestWare ensures that no guest call falls through the cracks. Prior to GuestWare’s implementation, calls were sometimes lost. “When the front desk was very busy, phones were not always being answered,” Martin says. “Guests could not get hold of anyone and calls would get lost.” Complaints about the unanswered calls later would show up on guest comment cards. Once GuestWare was up and running, however, those types of comments disappeared.

Before GuestWare was introduced at the Tropicana Resort & Casino, the process for tracking work orders was labor intensive. “There was a paper trail of work orders,” Martin says. “We had three or four people keeping track of them. We had 900 work orders outstanding when we implemented GuestWare.”

Now, with GuestWare used as the tool to produce and track work orders, there are only 30 outstanding at any one time. The Rapid Response process prioritizes urgent guest-reported issues first, then allows engineering to focus on longer term work orders. GuestWare’s Work Orders system provides the ability to enter, print, monitor and close work orders quickly and efficiently. Easy-to-use work order entry screens provide fast access to maintenance categories. GuestWare automatically tracks response time and provides a follow-up feature to monitor unfinished assignments. GuestWare also tracks the costs incurred from each work order. Martin says she likes the fact that she can track work orders by trade, manage the time allowed to perform a task, and track the productivity of those handling the work orders.

**The Data/Process Improvement Connection**It is amazing what you can learn when you slice and dice 5,000 calls a month. From analyzing and improving average response times to eliminating recurring issues, the greatest value with implementing GuestWare is typically how the data is used to improve processes.

Martin uses GuestWare to track recurring incidents. Reports generated out of the system include: top 10 most frequent incidents, daily incidents, guest compensation, top 10 most expensive incidents, the number of incidents per month and average response time. Martin, the hotel manager, director of facilities, PBX manager, director of housekeeping, and executive housekeeper meet monthly to review incident reports.

“GuestWare reports help us pinpoint the locations of specific maintenance issues,” Martin says.

The reports result in fewer guest problems and better utilization of resources, especially during peak times. If the total number of issues is reduced, the response times get better. Martin says she also uses GuestWare reports to identify the top five reasons guests change their rooms. One of the reasons, she discovered, was that an increasing number of guests were asking for nonsmoking rooms. Managers also occasionally use GuestWare reports to check on the productivity of personnel. Reports detail specific response time per employee, which can be valuable for training and performance reviews.

The decision to implement GuestWare at the Tropicana Resort & Casino was based, in part, on its success at Aztar’s Tropicana Casino and Resort in Atlantic City, N.J. GuestWare was launched there in May 2004. Now, two years later, they are benefiting from the software’s ability to eliminate recurring problems, lower operating costs, and streamline and accelerate guest response, incident tracking and work order processes. The end result is a higher level of guest service that keeps guests coming back for more gaming, shows and relaxation.

**About GuestWare:**GuestWare provides property and enterprise CRM solutions specifically to the lodging industry with more than 700 hotel customers and more than 15 PMS interfaces. GuestWare enables hotels and management companies to streamline and enhance service delivery and guest recognition processes. GuestWare was the first company to develop a comprehensive Rapid Response problem resolution system integrated with guest recognition and essential to successful customer relationship management.

GuestWare is developed, marketed, implemented and supported by Diversified Computer Corp., Seattle. GuestWare’s suite of software products includes Enterprise, Guest Recognition, Rapid Response, Incident Tracking, Facilities Maintenance, Comment Card Tracking and Communication Server. For more information about GuestWare, go to www.guestware.com, or contact Mike Benjamin at (888) 504-8378.

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