**With GuestWare’s Help, Service Teams at La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort and Casino Drastically Reduce Room Defects, Accelerate Response Time**EAGLE BEACH, ARUBA—More than two years ago, 10 to 12 percent of the guests checking into La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort and Casino experienced a guestroom with some type of defect. That was unacceptable to the Central Dispatch Service/Guest Response Center team at the property — Aruba’s largest resort. To improve the level of service offered to guests, the dispatch team implemented GuestWare, the lodging industry’s leading customer relationship management software, as part of its "0" Defect Program. Now, less than 1 percent of guests experience a room with any type of defect.

A total of 50 to 250 guests check into the 811-suite resort each day. Over a year’s time, those guests typically will call the La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort and Casino’s dispatch center tens of thousands of times to report incidents. In 2003, the dispatch center team handled some 31,000 incident calls—with the help of GuestWare—and followed up on each and every one.

Before implementing GuestWare, the resort used manual processes to respond to, track and analyze guest requests and incidents. In an effort to improve the quality of its services and products, resort staff introduced GuestWare so that they could automate the guest response process. A few of the specific reasons for introducing the software included: effective monitoring, immediate availability of quantitative reports and also to promote/facilitate direct accountability for the departments responding to guest needs.

The dispatch team at the La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort and Casino uses GuestWare to run several highly effective guest service programs. In addition to the aforementioned "0" Defect Program for vacant rooms, staff run a Fast Response program for occupied rooms. The program operates on the premise that housekeeping and engineering personnel will resolve any issue within 30 minutes no matter what time of the day. GuestWare’ Rapid Response system is used to run the Fast Response program.

In response to engineering-related issues, the resort currently averages a 33-minute response time compared to more than 40 minutes before GuestWare. In response to housekeeping-related issues, the resort averages 28 minutes compared to more than 45 minutes before GuestWare. The resort’s security department’s response time is now just 18 minutes. Before GuestWare, resort managers were unable to produce accurate and reliable response data.

**Reports Help Eliminate Recurring Problems**

GuestWare also has given Cabana All Suite Beach Resort and Casino personnel the ability to identify repetitive incidents. As a result, process improvements have been put in place to eliminate the root causes of such incidents. In one example, guests had been complaining about hair dryers not working. A GuestWare report was able to show that the root cause of the problem was a particular hair dryer model that was used in only some of the rooms. Until permanent replacements could be made, the issue was temporarily resolved by placing an instruction sheet in the rooms with that type of hair dryer. The measure reduced the number or hair dryer-related incidents by 14 percent. It also freed up engineering responders for more critical needs.

In other instances, GuestWare reports helped reduce the frequency of toilet problems by 6 percent, room key issues by 17 percent and helped streamline the process by which housekeepers stock extra linen and pillows. Reports showed housekeepers when to expect higher demand and freed up their time to address more critical issues.

**System Strengthens Inventory Control Process**

Using Incident Tracking system reports from GuestWare, La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort and Casino has been able to monitor the inventory in its store room. Because GuestWare breaks down incidents by incident codes, consumption of items such as light bulbs can be tracked. This information is important when it comes to ordering bulbs in bulk and supports the engineering department’s system to ensure that the correct types are ordered.

Incidents occurring in the rooms—relating to damages caused by guests—also are tracked by GuestWare. On a weekly and monthly basis this information is used to complement the night audit income reports. The incidents are compared against charges logged by personnel at the front desk.

GuestWare has been configured to enable La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort and Casino staff to differentiate between non-standard requests and incidents and those incidents relating to non-conformance to operational standards. All incidents and requests that relate to non-conformance to operational procedures are printed daily for the housekeeping department. The executive housekeeper reviews the incidents and pulls out the most frequent ones to develop a retraining program. This is done on a monthly basis, but if there are critical issues they are addressed more often.

Since implementation of the Central Dispatch Service/Guest Response Center, the human resources department at La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort and Casino has been better able to evaluate the work of the property’s employees. The employee evaluation has a part dedicated to effective practice of the resort’s operational standards. With GuestWare, frequency of non-conformance to the standard operational procedures can be quantified.

GuestWare reports also provide information that is used for employee recognition programs. Recently, the human resources department began evaluating GuestWare’s use for intra-department recognition (e.g. engineering responders with the most work load and best time for fast response). Responders are very happy with GuestWare and value the reports. The reports illustrate their performance and have had a tremendous impact on response time. Responders also are more participative in review processes and contribute more problem-solving ideas.

GuestWare has proven to be an excellent management tool for La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort and Casino. It has become a part of the working culture. The Central Dispatch Service/Guest Response Center team believes that it is an indispensable tool.

This article was prepared by the Quality Assurance Department at La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort & Casino in Aruba.

**About La Cabana All Suite Beach Resort & Casino:**

La Cabana All Suite Resort & Casino, Aruba’s largest resort, features more than 800 spacious suites in a luxurious tropical setting. The property offers a fitness center, day spa, scenic trails, tennis, scuba, parasailing, day and sunset cruises and myriad dining options. The resort’s restaurants include the Captain’s Table, E Piscado, Lobby Café, Islander Grill, O Sushi Mi, Pizza & Pastabilities, Hang Out Restaurant, and Las Ramblas. For more information about La Cabana All Suite Resort & Casino, call (800) 835-7193 or go to www.lacabana.com.

**About GuestWare:**

GuestWare, Customer Relationship Management software for the lodging industry, is developed, marketed, implemented and supported by Diversified Computer Corp., Seattle. GuestWare is installed in more than 700 hotels worldwide. For more information about GuestWare, go to www.guestware.com, or contact Mike Benjamin at (888) 504-8378.

Meet Mike Benjamin, vice president of sales for GuestWare, at booth 1336 at this year’s HITEC, June 21-24, at the Dallas Convention Center.