

Luxury Resort Property Management

Implementing a Complex Luxury Resort Property Management Solution

The Challenge

The Blackstone Group (Blackstone) acquired a 983 room full-service luxury resort property that included a full-service golf, spa, membership, marina, activities, and privately-owned unit services. The privately-owned and property units were managed as a whole, but sold and marketed as separate entities, each maintaining its own Website, 800 reservation number and Central Reservations System (CRS).

Operating the property with an antiquated AS400 Property Management System with a one-way CRS interface, caused substantial inefficiencies such as segregated production reporting, operational overhead costs and poor data accuracy.

By implementing a full-service Property Management System solution with a robust two-way CRS interface and owned unit solution, Blackstone would be able to:

- Reduce owner accounting effort by automating owner management month-end, P&L and accounting processes;
- Automate the process to maintain revenue parity across common owned units;
- Streamline revenue management by implementing a single image inventory, enabling quick response to changes in demand;
- Minimize group management effort by creating a single source for management of groups;
- Improve system support and maintenance by implementing a hosted, centralized system;
- Enhance operational reporting, segregating production by hotel and owned units;
- Decrease Central Reservation Office talk-times by enabling full view of all current reservations and capability to find, confirm and respond to general reservation inquiries for all reservation types; and

Results

- Centrally-hosted, multi-property Property Management System fully integrated with CRS for leisure and group business.
- Automated reservations and monthly accounting functions for privately-owned condominiums.
- Deployed guest self-service kiosks for check-in, key creation, folio printing, room assignment, and check-out services.
- Automated marina, membership and concessionaire accounting processes.

- Cut Check-In/Check-Out Times by implementing remote self-service kiosks at airport and lobby stations.

Solution

Edgewater Technology was engaged to identify a Property Management System solution that would provide significant improvements in managing owner, group, reservation, and revenue management processes for the resort property.

Edgewater proposed a centrally-hosted, multi-property Property Management System solution that provided single image rates, reservations, groups, inventory with the CRS, and a fully-integrated privately-owned unit management solution.

The Owner Management Solution was implemented to automate multiple accounting functions, including the automated postings of recurring charges and a streamlined month-end with owner P&L and income

statements. For reservations, a logical auto-rotation program was implemented to maintain revenue parity across common owned units.

Marina, Membership and Concessionaire Accounting were enhanced by implementing an auto-posting solution, alleviating the need to manage each manually via Microsoft tools.

A robust bi-directional CRS to Property Management System interface was implemented to achieve an immediate reduction in operational costs and to improve accuracy and integrity of data in all systems. The solution allowed Revenue Management to immediately identify and respond to changes in demand, eliminated manual maintenance of data in multiple systems and improved the accuracy of production reporting.

Remote guest self-service kiosks were wirelessly deployed to facilitate rapid guest check-in/out services. These remote stations allowed for key creation, folio print, guest check-in, room assignment, and check-out services ultimately reducing front desk wait times and improving overall guest satisfaction.

Providing overall project management services, Edgewater worked with the implementation teams and the Blackstone's business users to complete gap analysis, business process redefinition, requirement definition, and User Acceptance Testing (UAT). Daily conference calls were conducted to coordinate the design and deployment efforts between the project, vendor and business teams.

The Edgewater team initiated the project by interviewing members of the Property Management and Information Technology (IT) teams to detail current process and technology deployment. Based upon the information gathered, Edgewater produced a comprehensive assessment of the current project status, to be presented to Blackstone's executive management. The presentation illustrated high-risk processes and expensive technology integration points, drawing specific focus to a proposed resolution that alleviated these inefficiencies.

Edgewater then formulated a detailed project plan maintaining clear visibility into the tasks needed in order to meet the objectives of the deployment, and highlighting the key phases of the project: data collection, migration, hardware/software setup, environment configuration, user testing, training, and deployment into production.

Edgewater led both the build and deployment efforts, preparing detailed qualitative reviews for Blackstone's executive team. With extensive analysis and documentation of current and target data systems, Edgewater built custom tools for converting legacy data to the target system. A complete validation of the deployment approach was facilitated in a UAT environment, confirming operational and technology readiness for production.

Edgewater's proven methodology contributed to a manageable schedule, high caliber deliverables and on time deployment while keeping both the business users and IT well informed of status, issues and resolutions.

Success Factors

- Close coordination with Property Management and IT teams.
- Thorough, detailed understanding of current and future property management processes.
- Comprehensive project planning focused on property requirements, process design, data conversion, testing, and detailed production cutover.
- Clear communications and management of all project team members, including property and vendor staff resources.