At Bay Creek Resort, The Finer Things in Life Are Just a Phone Call Away

Executive Summary

Customer Name
- Bay Creek Resorts

Industry
- Hospitality

Business Challenge
- Phased-in approach to deployment and business optimization
- Platform for delivering high-end customer service applications
- Reduction of converging networks' initial costs

Network Solution
- Cisco 7970 Series handsets with color screens
- Cisco Unity™ Unified Messaging Solution
- Custom XLM application from Percipia
- Cisco PIX® Security Appliance

Business Value
- Cost-effective and simpler approach to facilitate constant growth
- Phased-in deployment plan that will eventually include up to 6000 handsets in hundreds of buildings
- High-end customer experience that allows guests to order food, make restaurant reservations, reserve a tee time, set spa appointments, and even check out of their rooms using the Cisco IP phones

The planners and developers of Bay Creek Resort have a very single-minded focus: To provide superb customer service for the resort's high-end clientele. The resort, located in Cape Charles on the southernmost tip of Virginia's eastern shore, includes both Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus Signature golf courses and was selected one of the "Top Ten to Play" by Golf Magazine. In addition, the resort features a world-class marina, a beach club, a yacht club, a 50,000-square-foot clubhouse, an inn, and a spa.

The resort already had a network infrastructure based on technology from Cisco Systems® in place at Bay Creek's business headquarters. Mike Aquino, IT director for Bay Creek Resorts, wanted to find a solution that would integrate smoothly with the resort's existing technology, and also be deployed as each phase of the resort construction—from lodging to outdoor venues—was completed.

"Management left the technology decisions to me, and I knew I would be responsible if things didn't work," says Aquino, who turned to ABS Technology Architects, located in Virginia Beach. ABS is a Cisco® Premier Certified Partner and a Cisco SMB Select Partner, and holds Cisco specializations in both IP Communications and Wireless LAN.

"Bay Creek planners wanted to deliver the highest-quality end-user experience from all points of business within the resort," says Chris Zettervall, vice president of operations for ABS Technology Architects. "This is much more than just deploying phones in a resort. It's about designing a solution and adding applications that will deliver the high-end customer experiences to help set Bay Creek Resorts apart from its competitors."

"There's a big difference between traditional enterprise and a small to medium-sized business [SMB] customer such as Bay Creek Resorts," Zettervall says. "An enterprise business will have an advanced IT department that usually knows what it wants, and it wants a partner to help refine that knowledge. Most SMB IT purchases revolve around a driving need that is unique to their businesses. Companies then search for the technology that will have the greatest impact for them."

Aquino sat down with Zettervall to develop a plan for optimizing the business with a phased-in approach. While Aquino had a clear vision of what he wanted the communication solution to provide, he needed ABS's assistance in more clearly defining how to get there.

"Bay Creek will eventually have up to 6000 handsets deployed in hundreds of buildings," Zettervall says. "Our biggest challenge is to help the resort now by recommending things that make financial sense long-term, but do not require significant initial expenditure."

"In the end, we wanted a phone system that could be moved around easily and expanded to remote offices," says Aquino. "We wanted integrated e-mail, and we knew whatever system we chose needed the capability to expand as the hotel expanded. Like any business concerned with expenses, we wanted the biggest return on investment possible from the phone system." Zettervall showed how one unified system would ultimately save money by deploying different private branch exchange (PBX) telephone systems in each building and venue.

Custom XML Applications Provides Full Communications Platform at Every Guest's Fingertips

Zettervall and the ABS Technology Architects team designed an Extensible Markup Language (XML) application that sits on top of the existing network infrastructure. They put together a demonstration using Cisco IP Phone 7970 Series handsets with color screens. A custom XML application from Percipia turned the phone system into the full communications platform that Bay Creek was looking for. With the Percipia application, guests could order food, make restaurant reservations, reserve a tee time, set spa appointments, and even check out of their rooms using the Cisco IP phones.

"The application was a big turning point," Aquino says. "The owners are not experts in technology, but they're very visual and knew the kind of high-end communications they wanted to provide for guests. Cisco integration was absolutely critical for me, and the color phones, on-screen logos, and complete integration convinced management."

"The marina is completed now, so we're looking at bringing the system out to the boat slips," Aquino says. "The deployment will continue expanding to include the beach clubs, pools, and other outdoor areas. We are also developing plans to provide network connectivity for the homes being developed in the community. That way, homeowners can enjoy the same feature-rich communications that are available to our guests."

As new phases of the Bay Creek community come online, Aquino feels the resort is saving money every time a new building opens up.

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"We might have paid a little more upfront," he says. "But now when we're ready to open a new phase of the resort, we just add a switch that handles voice, video, and data, instead of paying for a whole new phone system in every building. It is a much simpler approach to facilitating constant growth."

With the ABS-designed solution firmly in place and resort development underway, Bay Creek Resorts has invested its valuable working capital in a way that has the greatest impact on business: Providing guests with an excellent, highly-reliable communications solution so all the finer things in life are just a little bit closer.

This customer story is based on information provided by Bay Creek Resort and describes how that particular organization benefits from the deployment of Cisco products. Many factors may have contributed to the results and benefits described; Cisco does not guarantee comparable results elsewhere.

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