



Kurt Lehrke
General Manager

The Hotel Palace Berlin, located in the centre, is one of Berlin's most renowned private business and convention hotels. It has 282 rooms and suites, furnished and equipped with everything today's business travellers need. The Hotel Palace Berlin has been working with Swisscom as a network and service provider since 2003.

Our Payback? Guest Loyalty!

Close-up on the *****Hotel Palace in Berlin

Hotel Palace is one of Berlin's most prestigious business venues. The deluxe 5-star property features 282 suites and guest rooms, spacious conferencing facilities and an internationally renowned gourmet restaurant, the "first floor". This luxury property is presently being refurbished with a Category-7 cabling infrastructure. Swisscom are deploying the new network to provide their IP-convergent guest services, which include Swisscom IPTV and guest room entertainment, seamless Internet access in all hotel areas, its Business Centre Solution and managed services for the hotel's conference area. We asked General Manager, Kurt Lehrke, why the Palace Hotel needed a new network infrastructure...

Today's fast-paced IT business requires us to be proactive. Just look at the amazing evolution of guest demand for technology over the past 10 years: In 2000, we belonged to the avant-garde, deploying two public Internet PCs in the hotel lobby. In 2003, Swisscom installed a WLAN to offer high-speed Internet access in all hotel areas. We subsequently extended the WiFi coverage into the Conference area and scaled our network several times for

specific events. By 2006, data security was becoming a major concern, which led us to wire our meeting rooms and improve the user authentication with Swisscom. This year, we realized that our guest room TV service needed refreshing. Even though our system has only been in place for little more than 10 years, it's already dated by today's standards. Looking forward, we feel that only a first-class data network that branches into all hotel areas allows us to meet guest demand and retain our competitive advantage as a premier hotel and meeting venue.

What is the pay-back for your network investment?

Guest loyalty is the most important payback. It is hard to quantify, but ultimately it is what counts in our business. While we should not assume that any one particular service will turn a guest into a loyal customer, we must be aware that any one service that we are failing at can totally break the guest experience! Guest satisfaction is a very subtle concept; it depends on a variety of contributing services and factors. Do we really need a sauna, a Spa? Do we need a first-tier restaurant on our property? Do we need interactive, digital TV service in our guest rooms? The answer is yes, we do. Because we would risk our business in the superior 5-star segment if we didn't have it.

Why did you choose Swisscom as a technology partner?

We want a provider who feels the pulse of our business and who stays at the forefront of service innovation. A very large provider like a local Telecommunications incumbent does not really appeal to me, because I do not know what priority I am going to be for them after their next re-organisation. Amongst the smaller providers that can deliver Internet and TV services, Swisscom



are most advanced in terms of guest research and service innovation. I am impressed by their capability to transfer consumer technology to the hotel industry while serving every hotel client individually.

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Apart from your guest room entertainment service, where do you see the greatest demand for service innovation?

Our convention business has become increasingly dynamic in defiance of the recent economic downturn. Today's corporate clients ask for elaborate network solutions that include Wired and Wireless connectivity, videoconferencing units and other extras. At the same time, while we recognize the need for

more customization we also believe in new Swisscom tools that make it easier for us to book a standard Conference service at short notice. I must say that Swisscom has been a very competent partner in our meeting space, as well.

Now that your hotel has a state-of-the-art hotel network, what other services will you want to offer through it?

If I had to build a new hotel from scratch, I would certainly want to consolidate all services, from room access to climate control, in one unified IT environment. In

our case, however, we need to see what applications can be feasibly merged into our IP network without completely changing our overall service architecture. In fact, I am counting on Swisscom to show me options how to further digitize hotel specific applications, improve my hotel processes and become more efficient. One area of concern for me is energy management, where as an hotelier and entrepreneur I need to find a response to the continuous rise in cost.

About Swisscom Hospitality Services

A network and a hotel technology specialist, Swisscom Hospitality Services focuses on the design, implementation and management of integrated hotel IP networks. Swisscom Hospitality Services boasts exceptional customer proximity with Account Executives in 18 European countries and across the US. They manage clients' IT needs on-site; train staff on Swisscom solutions; and work with the hotel's sales team to handle its client technology needs.

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