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Mercure Cairns Harbourside Hotel

The Mercure Cairns Harbourside Hotel deployed a highly flexible Aastra 470™ IP Telephony solution that integrated voice, e-mail, text and mobile devices – all accessible from just one call number – to create competitive advantage and improve its guest experience.

Significant cost savings

Mercure Cairns Harbourside is located in Far North Queensland (FNQ) and is a tourism icon destination both for Australians and foreign tourists. Along with accommodation the hotel is used for conferences, meetings and functions. Located on the beautiful Cairns Esplanade, the hotel features spectacular city and ocean views. Mercure Cairns Harbourside is a member of the global Accor Hotels group.

The hotel was using a NEC PBX system that had reached the end of its commercial life. The telephony services and equipment were costing the hotel $10,000 annually yet few staff knew how the telephones worked. Support and maintenance was a critical issue as parts were difficult to source and for expediency sake, areas of the system were being patched or shut down further reducing its capabilities. There was no automation or visibility on usage, no integration, and no ability to add unified communications (UCC) features to improve productivity. Industry stories about hotels enduring days of communication blackouts due to ageing telephony added to concerns as a basic malfunction could have brought the hotel to a standstill. In response, the hotel considered upgrading to a new NEC system. However, after reviewing the needs of guests and staff and the total cost of ownership, the Mercure Cairns Harbourside selected an Aastra 470™ IP Telephony solution.

Hospitality focus

According to FNQ telephony specialists Telequip, which installed the system, Aastra is ideally suited for the hospitality sector. "Aastra has been developed from the ground up to meet the needs of the hospitality industry including futureproofing your investment," says Telequip managing director, Christine Oberhamberger. "Its applications, flexibility and quality have been designed to enable users to do more and do it for less cost. You can understand why Aastra has been certified worldwide by the Mercure's owners, the Accor Group."

She said hotels were attracted to Aastra's direct commitment to customers and through its reseller partners. "Its business approach and reliable pre and post sales support are particularly important for businesses that are obsessive about guest service," she said.

The all-in-one Aastra 470 unified communications and collaboration (UCC) solution seamlessly integrates communication servers, terminals, software and mobility solutions and applications. It is highly flexible and scalable, easily accommodating 4 – 600 users on the one system.

The Mercure Cairns Hotel Harbourside deployment included an upgrade to ISDN lines, inclusion of a 5380 IP handset, and 16 X 5370 IP handsets featuring 12 programmable keys. Also included were 4 X M530 expansion keypads designed to increase the power and flexibility of the Aastra 5370 IP handsets with 20 freely configurable keys with two memory places each – useful for storing individual call numbers or functions for fast speed dialiing.

The Challenge:
Using an aging NEC phone system was preventing the Mercure Cairns Harbourside Hotel from safeguarding its telephony and significantly improving its guest experience.

The Solution:
✦ Aastra 470 IP Telephony system with IP Handsets and Aastra Mobile Client™

The Benefits:
✦ An all-in-one highly flexible solution, which is quick to install and easy to manage, and seen as a single system with complete feature transparency
✦ Open architecture enabling the system to seamlessly accommodate traditional and state-of-the art voice-over-IP (VoIP) technologies and open standard protocols (SIP)
✦ Low total cost of ownership with some moves, adds and changes to be performed by hotel staff
✦ Mobile integration across all devices providing all the benefits of UCC at your fingertips
✦ Voice, data, video and applications on one network – public or private, fixed or mobile – enabling access to all office functions such as presence, management applications and phone services, as well as manage calendar and contacts
✦ Call diversion, team switching, user groups and manager/secretary functions facilitate team work. Least Cost Routing (LCR) or call cost recording (for caller-oriented billing of calls made on personal or third-party telephone terminals) facilitate cost management and create more transparency
✦ Provides tailored configurations to meet unique needs with access to all communication features and applications on an anywhere, anytime basis

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Paul Robinson,
Chief Engineer, Mercure Cairns Harbourside

Mercure Cairns Harbourside Hotel
Reference Case

Hospitality

Due to Aastra's award-winning open architecture, 220 existing room handsets were retained and integrated with the Aastra 470 system. As a result, and without needing to purchase hundreds of new handsets for guest rooms, the Mercure Cairns Harbourside was able to significantly improve its in-room guest services at almost nil cost. Popular features included automated wake up calls, messaging, outside dialling, and room to room calls. Also populare were direct access to meeting rooms, gym and spa as well as restaurant bookings and billing information.

"Not only will switching to the NBN Co further cut costs on phone, internet and inter-office communication, it will enable the hotel to stay faster connected to guests, staff, suppliers and systems from multiple locations"

Chief engineer at the Mercure Cairns Harbourside, Paul Robinson, said the embedded UCC applications in the Aastra 470 also provided a boost to hotel efficiency. "The system has been configured with a day and night mode. During the day the system rings a defined group of telephones for direct access to key personnel, while in night mode callers are directed to a voice mailbox linked to Reception. Day and night voicemail boxes, separate ring boxes, and hotel-wide speed dial options also add to efficiencies."

Front Offce integration has been achieved via an IP interface and auto attendant enables staff to inform guests about a waiting queue or direct calls to other personnel or a section through menu options. Instant messaging (IM), a presence management and conference call capability also adds to hotel performance.

Mobile phone integration

Cordless phones had been included with the NEC system and used extensively throughout the property. However, the costs of these phones were becoming prohibitive. They required significant investment to maintain as handsets were unreliable and expensive to replace, and call costs were high.

The inclusion of Aastra Mobile Client™ (AMC) as part of its 470 solution enables employees to access all the features available on their desk phone via their mobiles. It enables employees to be reached on a single number, regardless of the iOS or Android device they are using or where they are located.

No additional equipment or software is required and all calls between hotel and mobile phones are free. As well as call handling, hotel staff are able to view, accept, update and close texts and messages anywhere, anytime. Guest information, supplier orders, food & beverage updates and bookings are all accessible and without having to return to a desktop computer.
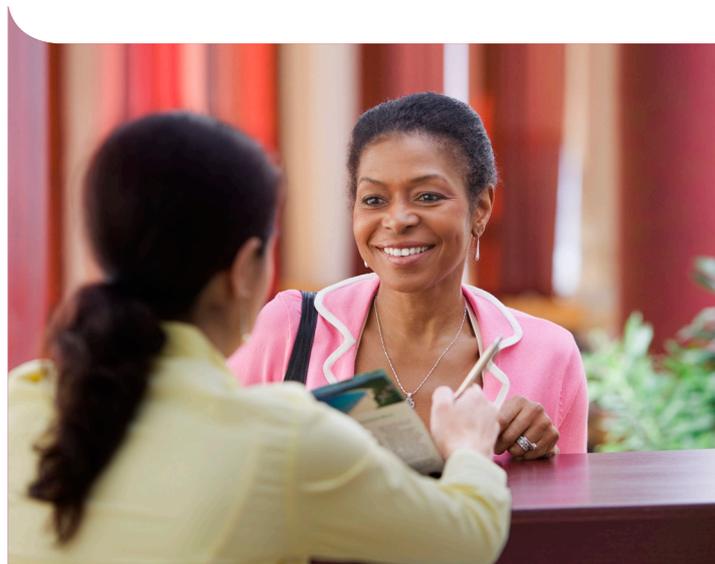
Future proofing technology

The hotel retained its existing ISDN for broadband, easily accommodated by the Aastra 470. However, with Aastra's open architecture, flexibility and scale the Mercure Cairns Harbourside is able to switch to Australia's National Broadband Network (NBN) at a time of the hotel's choosing at little additional cost.

"Not only will switching to the NBN Co further cut costs on phone, internet and inter-office communication, it will enable the hotel to stay faster connected to guests, staff, suppliers and systems from multiple locations," said Robinson.

To learn more about the Aastra 400 and Aastra's complete product portfolio, please visit: **www.aastra.com.au**

For more information on joining Aastra's reseller program, contact us at **partners.au@aastra.com**

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