

Apex Hotels' central reservations office can now fill its restaurants when the restaurants are closed

QuadraNet Restaurant Solutions

Just as Edinburgh and Dundee has seen its economic wealth flow from its famous Forth and Tay rivers, so one of Scotland's premier hotel chains, Apex Hotels, is seeing restaurant bookings flow in through the introduction of the latest QuadraNet ResV4 real-time reservation system.

Apex Hotels see restaurant bookings up by 300% within two months

Contemporary, chic and stylish, Apex Hotels is Scotland's leading contemporary four-star hotel group. The company operates three hotels in Edinburgh and the Apex City Quay Hotel & Spa in Dundee. These properties include a range of restaurants, brasserie and bars.

Like many hotels, especially those in cities, Apex face huge competition from local restaurants. The challenge was to attract more resident and non resident customers. Apex has successfully addressed the issue with ResV4.

The key issues:

Apex Hotels' reservations are managed centrally but prior to the installation of ResV4, the call centre did not have visibility across the hotels numerous restaurants. When the restaurants were closed, table reservations were lost, as calls were circulated or put on hold. Reception staff were too busy to leave the front desk to enter details into the restaurant diary.

Each restaurant was managed using a traditional diary but this introduced further mistakes, especially during the busiest periods when several people needed to rely on it without always having clear knowledge of current bookings. The group was losing business and there was a real concern to:

- enable hotel reception to book tables**
- introduce enterprise wide, real-time visibility**
- yield manage tables**

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- reduce booking errors**
- improve table utilisation**
- introduce online bookings**
- minimise no shows**
- improve staff rotas**
- synchronise front of house and kitchen activity**
- improve the customer database**

QuadraNet ResV4 selected

Following a review of systems available, ResV4 was chosen. The QuadraNet support team worked with the Apex Hotels restaurant management team as it moved its procedures onto the new system. Part of QuadraNet's involvement at this time was to help overcome scepticism amongst some managers that the level of automation would undermine their ability to effectively manage their restaurants.

Why QuadraNet ResV4

QuadraNet were able to demonstrate why its system was the most cost effective solution for a multi-property hospitality business. This proved the case as the system paid for itself within three months through increased table utilisation, greater efficiency and better staff management.

Multi-source reservations

ResV4 is a live-data system that handles input from a variety of sources and this led to an immediate up-selling of all the restaurants within the group. The centralised reservations office is able to see what tables are available at any of the restaurants and book them at the same time as taking room reservations. The enterprise wide, real-time visibility also enables them to cross-sell facilities when opportunities arise. Hotel reception staff can yield manage tables from the ResV4 system using one screen and yield manage rooms from the hotel system using another.

At the local level, individual restaurants handle reservations directly and bookings over the internet are automatically slotted into available spaces with customer details displayed.

ResV4. An event in itself

Apex Hotels event management team operated separately regarding restaurant bookings and this sometimes caused problems. It needed to co-ordinate its bookings with those of central reservations and those taken by the restaurants. The reality was that event bookings were often lost when reservations could not be confirmed on the spot. With ResV4 the team can book events and conferences without delay and without disrupting the restaurants' routine business.

Additional revenue from Web bookings

One of the items on the Apex Hotels “wish list” was to harness the power of the web. ResV4 provides an optional “Livebooking.com” booking service. This is a live web portal that links to third party websites such as Toptable.com, lastminute.com and others.

The hotel has seen an increase in web bookings as the public become increasingly confident about surfing the web. Alastair Roy, Commercial Director, has also noticed that the simplicity of the system is encouraging transactions to be completed online. He said, “Research shows that the clearer it is to make a booking the more likely customers are to enter their credit card details”.

An effective management system

Apex Hotels restaurant managers are using the real-time data from the ResV4 system to plan staff rotas more accurately against demand. Visibility across the restaurant eliminates high and low demand in the kitchen and provides more easily managed covers. This has translated into significant savings in staffing costs. Alastair Roy believes the biggest benefit is to customers. “The balancing of resources has meant customers experience a more consistent service.

With ResV4’s real-time reporting at the heart of the hotel group’s F&B business bookings can flow in from a variety of sources: from the locality, from hotel central reservations, from events management or from the web without any duplication or disruption to individual manager’s ability to run the restaurant.

Alastair Roy said “now everyone can see the real-time situation and yield manage the restaurants - it has made a huge difference to increasing our F&B revenue”.

Flexible pro-active marketing

Apex Hotels had previously produced restaurant promotions and hotel packages but the new system provides an additional channel for collecting customer details. Alastair Roy said, “Prior to this our methods weren’t as streamlined or systematic. ResV4 gives us much more control”.

The next step

The hotel group has recognised the power of ResV4 to improve its marketing capability. Now it is planning to increase this activity. ResV4 will be used to identify its corporate, private and special interest groups and the data will be used to do more segmented promotions. For example, it will target local institutions and encourage them to use the restaurants during periods of low demand.

Alastair Roy also realises that they can plan special events and use the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) capability of ResV4 to test the response through email promotions to see whether a proposed event should be staged.

Training

Apex Hotels began by training the waiting staff. This is being extended to more permanent staff since this will provide additional stability during seasonal fluctuations. The group has now established a programme of "training the trainer". This places the emphasis on training the more permanent senior staff who will be responsible for training new employees. The system has consistently met with a positive reaction without any negative feedback, despite an initial wariness.

Results

The centralised real-time booking system has achieved a 300% increase in bookings in just two months.

90% of bookings that would previously been lost are captured.

ROI has been achieved in just three months.

Reductions in staffing costs as rotas are matched to demand.

Apex Hotels restaurants are now automatically benefiting from bookings coming in from multi sources and multi-terminals. ResV4's real-time intelligence shows how bookings are progressing and waiting staff can spend more time with customers knowing that their multi-source bookings are automatically managed without fear of mistakes or disappointments.

Put better business at your fingertips

QuadraNet ResV4 has been proven in the most demanding restaurant and hospitality environments in the UK and mainland Europe. To see how this latest technology can transform the performance of your hotel restaurants ask the sales team for a free demonstration. Email demo@QuadraNet.co.uk or call the sales line: 01628 472999.

If you would like to discuss any issues raised in this case study please contact QuadraNet Systems at the address below.

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