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Hotel du Vin sees massive productivity boost of the order of 300%

QuadraNet Restaurant Solutions

Hotel du Vin currently operates six hotels in England. Each establishment had its own independent hotel reservation system, but this did not extend to the restaurant. When it moved its restaurants from the conventional diary system to a reservation system linked to the hotel system, the group experienced a major increase in business.

Hotel du Vin uses reservation system to protect customer experience

The Hotel du Vin achievement began with its first hotel and bistro in Winchester. It became an overnight success that attracted critical acclaim in the UK national press and a strong following in the local community. It set a template for future successes as the group opened hotels in Tunbridge Wells, Harrogate, Birmingham, Bristol and Brighton. One journalist has described the company as a group of “hotels with substance and wit”. The philosophy is one of good quality without all the frills, sensible prices and friendly, knowledgeable service. The ethos runs throughout each establishment, including the restaurants, which are renowned for their relaxed dining experience and freshly prepared food.

The key issues:

The group is in the envious position of managing a chain of extremely popular hotel restaurants and bistros which attract customers from both inside and outside the hotels. Although there was no pressure to increase bookings, there was a need to improve performance during periods of peak demand. ResV4 provided the ideal solution.

The company was looking to increase the profitability of its restaurants by improving the efficiency of its operations and reducing wastage. Since the Hotel du Vin group already had an established following for its successful F&B business, it needed to protect its reputation by ensuring a consistently good customer experience. Key objectives included:

- reducing booking errors**
- improving table utilisation**
- minimising no shows**
- introducing better working methods**

Background

The restaurants were originally run on the conventional diary system but, due to the hectic environment, this was introducing too many errors. The hotels do not hold tables specifically for residents and so booking flow is from a straight combination of hotel guests and outside customers. There was no visibility across the restaurant and consequently staff were hampered by the usual problems associated with paper-based systems. The diary was circulated amongst staff at busy sites where five telephones are in simultaneous use. This manual practice was creating duplications and poor handwriting lead to frequent misunderstandings.

QuadraNet ResV4 selected

ResV4 was chosen because of its ubiquitous presence across the hotel F&B sector. The group set up an implementation team and QuadraNet worked alongside it as the company moved all of its restaurants from the diary system. A common concern when moving from a paper-based system is that managers will lose control of the restaurant. QuadraNet therefore spent time demonstrating how the system would have the opposite effect, giving managers more effective command of operations.

Why QuadraNet ResV4

With such widely deployed systems across the global hospitality industry, QuadraNet was able to provide extensive documented evidence of the many ways the ResV4 system can introduce measurable improvements to restaurant working practices. Hotel du Vin realised that these efficiency gains would mean that the system would pay for itself within a matter of weeks.

Life changing improvement to restaurant operation

ResV4 is a standalone system that can integrate with other systems. By creating an interface with the hotel's existing reservation system, reception staff could now book restaurant tables at the time of taking room reservations. This live data system also meant that hotel and restaurant staff had a real-time view of table availability and could avoid accidental over-booking. According to Charles Morgan, Operations Director, an improvement in the way the restaurants performed was felt "from day one".

Increased professionalism, more confidence, higher throughput

Although there was some initial uncertainty about introducing a computerised system to the hectic environment of a restaurant that was fully booked most nights, the restaurant managers quickly understood how the ResV4 system makes it easier to plan and staff can work with more confidence. This has raised morale and improved the general working environment. Safeguards can be put in place to prevent others from changing the manager's plans. Charles Morgan said, "One of the most resistant managers to change now swears by the system whereas before he would just swear. He now manipulates the data to the Nth degree to his benefit – and that of the restaurant in general."

Although an increase in bookings was not one of the original objectives for restaurants that could easily fill tables, this business benefit still followed implementation. Real-time visibility enabled staff to spread the load over a longer period of the day or evening and this, together with reduced levels of error and easier planning, meant staff automatically increased the number of diners they handled at each of the restaurants.

The enduring popularity of Hotel du Vin's restaurants and bistros means that rather than turn customers away, staff now use ResV4 to bring in more and increase profitability. Visibility across the restaurant is also helping to balance demand in the kitchen and provide more easily managed covers.

With every restaurant and bistro having its own real-time visibility, Hotel du Vin has seen increased revenue from increased throughput and better table utilisation. The improved efficiency is also helping the company to maintain the exceptional levels of customer satisfaction for which Hotel du Vin's restaurants are famed. Charles Morgan said, "...you can't believe how it has changed our lives...how precise and clever the system is."

The next step

Hotel du Vin does not currently take bookings via the web, but Charles Morgan said this is one area they were now exploring with QuadraNet. The preference of the managers is to handle bookings on site but there is a growing awareness that the integrated web booking module can provide a further channel without disrupting the activities of the managers at any time.

Training

The company invested in training its entire front of house staff, provided on-site by QuadraNet. The ease of use was quickly appreciated and has resulted in lower staff turnover and reduced the level of stress and hassle in meeting customers' expectations. It has served to improve the entire working environment.

Results

The restaurants have seen around 300% improvement in revenue

Hotel reception can now book restaurant places at the time of taking room reservations

Restaurants are now less stressful work places

Significant reduction in human error

Maximum table utilisation

Fewer no-shows

Improved staff morale

Consistent customer delivery

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 establishment, and to arrange a free demonstration, please contact QuadraNet directly on 01628 472999 or via email at res@quadranet.co.uk

If you would like to discuss any issues raised in this case study, please contact QuadraNet on 01628 472999 or via email at res@quadranet.co.uk

If you would like more information about Hotel du Vin, please visit www.hotelduvin.com

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