

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



ABOUT WESTGATE RESORTS

Type: Largest privately-held timeshare company in the world.

Location: Headquartered in Orlando, Florida, with more than 20 resorts in premier travel locals throughout the U.S.

Founded: 1982

Number of employees: 10,000+

Website: www.westgateresorts.com

CUSTOMER NEEDS

Westgate Resorts needed a unified communication solution to:

- Enhance communications throughout corporate offices, contact centers, and sales centers to provide an exceptional guest experience
- Protect its existing telephony investment while taking advantage of IP applications
- Increase staff productivity
- Lower operating costs

Westgate Resorts Welcomes Mitel Unified Communications to its Family

The Company

More than 30 years ago, from a tiny Florida orange grove, in an office located in his family's garage, David A. Siegel started a real estate development firm. Today, through vision, persistence, and resourcefulness, Siegel has grown Central Florida Investments, Inc. (CFI) into the largest privately-held corporation in Central Florida with investments in hotels, insurance, magazines, real estate, travel services, oil, cattle, and Internet companies.

The crown jewel of the CFI family, Westgate Resorts, was established in 1982 when Westgate Vacation Villas started sales one mile from Walt Disney World. Since that time it has become the largest privately-owned timeshare ownership company in the world, employing over 10,000 people throughout the U.S.

With the simple motto of "Good enough, is never good enough," Westgate and CFI strive to be the leader in the hospitality industry by constantly focusing their efforts on understanding customers' needs and exceeding their expectations.

The Challenge

Westgate understands that owners are not just customers, they are family, and it is important to ensure they enjoy every visit to a Westgate property. IT field operations manager for Westgate Resorts, Kevin Nicholson knew a key to achieving this exceptional guest experience was superior communications between staff and guests. Nicholson could see the industry shift to unified communications and knew it was time to upgrade Westgate's business operations.



SOLUTION COMPONENTS

- Mitel 3300 IP Communications Platform (ICP) in each office and sales center
- Mitel IP phones
- Mitel Enterprise Manager
- Mitel Teleworker Solution
- Mitel Your Assistant™

Fortunately, Nicholson didn't have to look far. He turned to the vendor Westgate had trusted with its communications for over 20 years.

"Westgate purchased its first Mitel® system in the 1980s," he said. "We love our Mitel system because the flexibility is top notch and no other switch out there gives you this with the same affordable price tag."

The Solution

For the first stage of its deployment, Westgate Resorts upgraded the communications of its four principal corporate offices, five contact centers, and four sales centers that have a combined 1,200 employees.

Each site is equipped with a Mitel 3300 IP Communications Platform (ICP). Operating across their LAN / WAN infrastructure, the 3300 ICP solution provides Westgate with seamless communications including full-feature transparency across all locations.

Mitel Enterprise Manager provides centralized management allowing Nicholson's team access to system information and the ability to make changes from a single, web-enabled management interface lowering business costs and increasing staff productivity. Enterprise Manager also provides proactive network health monitoring and voice-quality performance management that reduces maintenance costs and increases system availability.

Employees are provided with a Mitel IP phone and have access to standard unified messaging, auto attendant, automatic call distribution, and wireless capabilities. In the contact center, Westgate's new Mitel solution not only supports administrative personnel but also supplies the IP backbone that handles all call traffic coming into the contact center agents.

At the property level, Westgate Resorts has the opportunity to IP-enable legacy PBXs thus protecting existing investments while delivering all the advantages of a converged infrastructure. This gives Nicholson piece of mind, of knowing he can migrate Westgate's communications at a pace that suits business needs.

RESULTS

- Migration strategy that allows Westgate to move to an IP solution at a pace that suits its business needs
- A return on investment in only three to four months
- Established IP backbone to handle call traffic coming into the contact center
- Save time and money with a video conferencing solution that reduces or eliminates travel for employee training sessions
- Easy-to-use and maintain system allows IT staff to work on other projects that help the company operate more efficiently

Tailored Applications

"During our migration to the Mitel platform, our end users were extremely vocal about needing a group park feature and how it simplified their daily operations," said Nicholson. "At the time, Mitel did not offer this feature."

The issue was presented to Mitel. "And a few short months later it was available in a Mitel 3300 ICP software release," said Nicholson.

Mitel tailored an application that provides a visual indication for a call on hold for all group park keys in the same directory number so that the call can then be identified and picked up by any group member. The same group park feature access key can also be used to park and retrieve calls.

"Mitel's timely response to our needs demonstrates its overall commitment to its customer base," continued Nicholson.

The Results

"Originally we went to IP because that is where the industry is going," said Nicholson. But he never imagined how quickly he would see the financial benefits, noting "Westgate Resorts has experienced an ROI in just three to four months."

Westgate has experienced significant savings from a video conferencing solution deployed in 10 locations for conference calls and training. "The benefit to our conferencing solution is we have full control over it and it saves our sales team from traveling for training," said Nicholson.

The new system has also allowed Nicholson to feel closer to his team because it is easier to communicate between sites. "We have seen huge savings on time and resources in maintaining the system, now we can work on other projects that help the company operate more efficiently."

“Our Mitel system is limitless on what we can do now and in the future in terms of communications. Everyone has been very happy with our Mitel solution and we haven’t yet tapped into the system’s full potential. In the long term, we foresee huge benefits.”

– Kevin Nicholson, IT Field Operations Manager, Westgate Resorts

The Future

Westgate Resorts continues to look towards the future. The company has begun to experiment with the Mitel Teleworker Solution for satellite offices. The plug-and-work feature of the Teleworker Solution extends the corporate network to any location making it easy for Westgate to set up remote locations to better serve current and potential owners.

Westgate’s executives have also experience the powerful productivity-enhancing features of Mitel Your Assistant™, a unified communications dashboard. Westgate staff can now avoid endless phone tag sessions with colleagues by using presence and availability information to save time contacting people by knowing if they are on the phone, away from their desk, available for secure instant chat, or wanting to data collaborate. “Those using the Your Assistant application love the ease-of-use features and functionality,” added Nicholson.

Additionally, Nicholson is researching Mitel’s Quick Conference solution. “Currently we are paying monthly bills for conferencing services and they add up. We would like to bring our audio conferencing in house in order to have full control over the system,” said Nicholson.

Mitel’s Quick Conference users can take advantage of the flexibility of simple ad hoc conferencing by setting up conference calls “on the fly” from any location at any time, without operator assistance.

“Our Mitel system is limitless on what we can do now and in the future in terms of communications,” concluded Nicholson. “Everyone has been very happy with our Mitel solution and we haven’t yet tapped into the system’s full potential. In the long term, we foresee huge benefits.”

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