

WIFI PROVIDES GUESTS THE FREEDOM TO ROAM AT THE LUXE MANOR

Alcatel-Lucent technology enables exclusive Hong Kong hotel to be the first to go fully wireless throughout



By combining tradition with the very latest converged technology, The Luxe Manor is setting the pace in the rapidly growing boutique hotel market by deploying Alcatel-Lucent's **OmniPCX** and IP telephones to deliver totally reliable and high quality performance.

The best of both worlds

Opened on December 28, 2006, The Luxe Manor hotel is one of the first designer boutique hotels in the Kowloon district of Hong Kong. Owned and operated by GR8 Leisure Concept, a Hong Kong hospitality group, this luxurious hotel provides guests with a modern re-interpretation of a European mansion featuring mythical elements within its architecture and design features which recall the works of 20th century surrealists. Featuring state-of-the-art technology, it is believed to be the first in the world to offer wireless voice in all its guestrooms, along with wired and wireless internet access throughout.

Indeed, advanced technologies are a major feature of the hotel. In-room facilities include NXTV's Interactive Infotainment

System which is viewed through an LCD flat panel television. Guests also have full and reliable access to VoWLAN [voice over wireless LAN] telephony and internet access, not just in their rooms, but wherever they may be on the hotel premises.

Designed to exceed expectations

The hotel has been designed, from the ground up to exceed the expectations of its guests in every respect and in today's world that means providing reliable and convenient wireless connectivity, says Terence Ronson, Managing Director – Pertlink, who designed the technological features of the hotel. And by taking this philosophy to the next level, it was decided that The Luxe Manor would be the first hotel to provide only wireless voice throughout the property.



PEOPLE TODAY ARE USED TO WORKING IN A MOBILE ENVIRONMENT – THEY WANT TO HAVE THAT FREEDOM AND FLEXIBILITY TO USE THE INTERNET OR MAKE A CALL WHEREVER THEY ARE. THE TECHNOLOGY IS A PART OF THE WHOLE THE LUXE MANOR EXPERIENCE.

Alcatel-Lucent is a household name and a very reputable one. We wanted to make sure that the product would be supported and also that the company would be there for us as well.

CHALLENGES

- Need to provide very high quality voice and data wireless access throughout entire complex
- Uncompromising approach to reliability and quality
- Solution needed to match high level brand qualities of new luxury hotel

SOLUTIONS

- Alcatel-Lucent **OmniPCX Enterprise** – provides central switching capability for voice and data traffic
- Alcatel-Lucent IP telephones – 200 units deployed in guest rooms and for staff use
- Wireless Access Points 200 plus units (including units deployed in elevators and on hotel roof) – deployed in high density to guarantee good reception

BENEFITS

- Full voice over IP and data access available to hotel guests throughout the entire building
- Reliable solution backed by a dependable and established supplier
- Technological capabilities play a key role in marketing of new luxury hotel

“We worked with GR8 on their design concept and market positioning and came up with a unique technology strategy for this very special project. Part of that was to create what we believe is the first only-wireless hotel in the world. You hear of a lot of hotels doing wireless in some form or another, which is perhaps data and some form or voice, but what we have done is gone totally voice and data wireless.” Unlike a traditional hotel with numerous telephone handsets – we just placed one – allowing the guest to move it to where they like – instead of looking for desk or wall based units.

Robust and reliable solutions

That connectivity is based around an Alcatel-Lucent **OmniPCX Enterprise** switch technology and Alcatel-Lucent IP handsets. Mainly because The Luxe Manor wanted to be 100 per cent sure that the solution would be reliable and that guests would feel entirely comfortable with the technology as well. This was important, Ronson notes, because the concept was to provide guests with total flexibility. “If they wanted to roam around their room or even to other rooms, perhaps to the restaurant or bar, or possibly Knutsford Terrace – they could simply take their room phone with them, and never miss a call.”

There could be absolutely no compromise with regard to quality and reliability, says Allan Strahle, General Manager of The Luxe Manor. “We are totally reliant on the wireless network to support the voice and data services, we had to design, procure and install something that was very robust. We wanted something that would be cost-effective to deploy and would give us the functions and features we required and one that would act as a platform that we could build upon.”

Pertlink put together an Invitation To Tender (ITT) for the voice and data network and issued it to six companies that it had pre-qualified as potentially suitable suppliers. After examining the responses, evaluating the suppliers, their proposed solutions and their ability to meet The Luxe Manor’s requirements, a local Alcatel-Lucent business partner, PCCW, became the project partner.



“WHAT WE PUT INTO THE ROOMS BECOMES PART OF THE HOTEL’S BRAND SO IT IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THAT RESPECT AS WELL. WE FELT THAT ALCATEL-LUCENT WAS VERY COMMENSURATE WITH THE DESIGN AND OVERALL PHILOSOPHY OF THE PROJECT.”

ALLAN STRAHLE,
GENERAL MANAGER, THE LUXE MANOR



Reputation counts

Ronson states: “PCCW is a reputable systems integrator here in Hong Kong and I had personally worked with them before on other projects. I had found that they would not only do what they had to do but would go that extra mile to help out on other things. Through them we were able to get the product delivered to our specifications.”

The proposed Alcatel-Lucent solution was a safe bet and exactly what right for The Luxe Manor. “Alcatel-Lucent is a household name and a very reputable one. It has a large customer base throughout the hospitality industry and also other industries. We wanted to make sure that the product would be supported and also that the company would be there for us as well.”

Alcatel-Lucent’s reputation is important because it also reflects on the reputation of the hotel, notes Strahle. “What we put into the rooms becomes part of the hotel’s brand so it is very important in that respect as well. We felt that Alcatel-Lucent was very commensurate with the design and overall philosophy of the project.”

Guaranteed good reception

One Wi-Fi handset has been installed in each of the 159 guest rooms of the hotel and a further 40 are deployed for staff use. Helping this function is a concealed wireless access point in each guest room and a significant number in different locations around the hotel itself. The high density of access points enables the hotel to guarantee ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ wireless reception to guests everywhere on the premises.

Ronson’s impression of both PCCW and Alcatel-Lucent has been very good. “We had direct communication with Alcatel-Lucent in the beginning in order to gain their support for the project, but during installation we just dealt with PCCW. Having secured that initial support, we hope we never had to go back and use it – instead we much prefer to be inviting someone along from Alcatel-Lucent, to shake their hands and say ‘thank you for doing what you said you would do’.”

The hotel opened on December 28, 2006 and with the testing of the wireless networking going very well. The availability of wireless data and voice connectivity throughout is seen as an important differentiator for The Luxe Manor, and is being given a high profile in the hotel’s marketing. It is sure to appeal to guests who want to enjoy traditional service and luxury but also make use of the very latest technologies.

“We have put in the support systems and made them very easy to use – guests can simply pick up a phone and make and receive calls, wherever they are in the hotel. There are no restrictions or barriers.”

“People today are used to working in a mobile environment – they do not want to be tethered anymore”, says Strahle. “Whether they have a Palm, or a Blackberry or a notebook – whatever they have got, they want to have that freedom and flexibility to use the internet or make a call and I think it helps to give them that functionality wherever they are in the hotel. The technology is a part of the whole The Luxe Manor experience.”

High expectations

Ronson fully expects the Alcatel-Lucent solution to deliver on all the hotel’s own expectations. “The objectives were set and the direction was there. We have put in the support systems as well as the front-end systems and made them very easy to use – guests can simply pick up a phone and make and receive calls, wherever they are in the hotel. There are no restrictions or barriers.”

The Luxe Manor is, as far as Strahle is aware, the only hotel in the world so far to deploy full wireless data and voice connectivity throughout the building – but it will undoubtedly not be the last. “This is a trend-setting development and we expect others to follow our lead, but we will always be the first to go completely wireless.”

**ALCATEL-LUCENT BUSINESS PARTNER****PCCW**

PCCW is the largest provider of communications services in Hong Kong and one of Asia's leading ICT companies. As an accredited Alcatel-Lucent partner it provides a wide range of IP-based and other business connectivity solutions and services to customers to the thriving commercial community.

