



Case Study

TEKsystems' national footprint and flexible scheduling provided cost-effective IT equipment upgrade services at more than 2,200 hotels

Client:

A large IT hardware and consulting company and its customer, a large hotel holding company

Industry:

Hospitality/Travel

Service Offering:

Global Services

Deployment Services



The Situation: A large international hotel holding company decided to replace the property management system in each of its North American hotels. The new system would change the nationwide reservations software process used at the hotels, and hotels were given three years to change to the new system. The hotel holding company selected a large IT hardware and consulting company (IT company) to provide the new hardware and the upgrade services.

The Challenge: More than twenty-two hundred hotels across the U.S. were in scope for this project. The IT company needed partners who could visit each site up to three times to gather site-specific pre-installation data, install the equipment in a designated onsite training room, and then move the equipment to the designated production areas.

Individual hotel owners determined the hotel upgrade dates, a schedule risk that demanded extremely flexible scheduling. The IT company needed to accommodate schedule peaks and valleys without the expense of a permanent full-time team. In addition, equipment was upgraded in a live environment and hotel personnel needed to accommodate the guests' schedules.

The Response: TEKsystems® developed a robust solution to accommodate the logistics of a fluctuating schedule with over sixty-six hundred site visits. To balance schedule changes against bench costs, TEKsystems supplemented national and regional traveling teams with local site resources that could be redirected with minimal lead time. TEKsystems leveraged its national footprint of eighty-five offices in the U.S. With more than twenty years experience at finding the right Technical Professional for the job, TEKsystems built a project team from one of the most extensive networks of technical employees in the U.S.

To minimize the need for bench time, TEKsystems' project leadership team worked with the IT company to develop consistent, repeatable processes and tools that could be used by qualified technicians with little prior project experience. The TEKsystems project leadership team provided a project orientation to technicians prior to their arrival on site to help ensure a smooth completion of site work. As a result, technicians were engaged as needed to complete any of the following three site visit requirements:

FIRST SITE VISIT: Technicians validated that the site was ready for the upgrade. A skilled technician evaluated the existing cable runs, cable jacks, electrical outlets, space requirements, environmental conditions,



and existing data cable compatibility against the requirements of the new system. Equipment replaced by the new system was tagged for future disposal. Business requirements were gathered from on-site hotel staff for distribution to applications and technical stakeholders. Site survey results were posted to a shared web portal within forty-eight hours of collection to speed the collaboration.

SECOND SITE VISIT: TEKsystems installed the production equipment stand-alone in a training room so the hotel staff could train and learn the new application. Each hotel was expected to meet one of eight site configurations, all of which included varying quantities of servers, network routers/switches, CPUs, monitors, and printers. After installing the equipment, the site team would validate that the server and the workstations had the correct software.

THIRD SITE VISIT: The team returned to participate in a comprehensive effort to convert the property to the new system. The team relocated the equipment from the training room to the designated production locations elsewhere in the hotel and coordinated the transfer of data to the new system. Equipment from the legacy property management system was uninstalled and tagged for disposal.

Minimizing inconvenience to hotel guests was of paramount concern to all parties. While the services provided in the first two site visits could be performed away from guests, the third site visit occurred at the front desk and could delay guest check-ins and check-outs. TEKsystems completed the system conversion activities during third shift when fewer guests would require service, and coordinated the system conversion activities with other stakeholders to ensure the hardware replacement instructions were as efficient as possible.

The Result: The IT company chose initially to divide the project deployment between two vendors and awarded TEKsystems a three-year contract. When the other vendor failed to deliver, TEKsystems assumed the full deployment capacity with only three days notice. Its proprietary project management methodology has provided the IT company with quality site performance, real-time progress management, and specifications adjustment. Quality assurance measures reduced project deliverable defects to zero.

In 2007 the contract was extended for an additional three years. While all hotels in this chain had been converted by 2007, the hotel holding company extended the scope of the project to upgrade existing systems to include additional features and new hardware. TEKsystems and the IT company expect to perform against the existing contract until the end of 2009.

The Technology: TEKsystems installed a variety of IT equipment during this project, including servers and server racks, network routers/switches, Point of Sale (POS) systems, business computers, monitors and printers.