



ATM—Case Study

Jarvis Hotels



At Jarvis Hotels, providing a high quality experience for its guests is essential. But it's not just about staff dedication as the company also depends on information technology for room bookings, billing and financial administration. With the help of ATM Technology Management, Jarvis Hotels has now outsourced technical support, improved user service and built a strong supplier partnership.



Each hotel relies on a property management system from IGS Hotel or Fidelio for bookings, check-in and guest accounting. Hotels have one or more servers, a local area network and personal computers. In addition to 90 servers and 1,000 PCs nationwide, there are also printers, call loggers and EPOS tills.

"In early 2000, we linked the hotels to our central office and provided e-mail, internet and intranet. We moved from around 100 PCs to over 1,000," said **Janet Gray**, Human Resources and IT Director.

Nearly all the IT infrastructure nationwide was looked after in-house by a small team. Most of the time was spent on problem-solving and repairing computers rather than on strategic IT development. Faced by constant support calls, it was decided to find a better yet cost-effective level of technical support.

Founded in 1990, Jarvis Hotels is one of the UK's leading hotel companies with 60 hotels from Inverness to Brighton and Swansea to Norwich. There are 6,000 bedrooms, 120 restaurants and bars plus 30 health clubs. In 2001, most of its hotels were re-branded as Ramada Jarvis. The company employs around 6,000 people and has a turnover of £162 million.



Special points of interest:

- Cover systems spread throughout the UK.
- Manage and resolve issues 24x7.
- Have access to a wide range of skills on demand
- Flexible hours and working locations
- Diverse technology including EPOS is covered



The parameters for the new service were simple. Any hardware or software problems had to be swiftly resolved. A technical support line for hotel staff needed to be backed by visiting engineers when necessary. And maintenance had to be national to cover the entire hotel group.

Some brief consideration was given to an in-house solution but mindful of the core business of running hotels, senior managers decided against. However, outsourcing was a big cultural step as it meant handing over responsibility for mission-critical software and hardware.

"I was looking for a company that was prepared to fit with our business culture. ATM had a national network of service engineers that could meet our coverage along with hotel industry knowledge. ATM's pricing structure offered us a cost-effective contract too," said Gray.



Everything has worked well for the last three years. ATM provides a 24-hour telephone help desk for all support calls.

This covers around 30 different vendors' hardware from personal computers, servers and printers to EPOS tills and telephone call loggers. Run from ATM's offices, the help desk is backed by an on-site engineer at Jarvis Hotel's central office.

The ATM engineer assists central office staff as well as undertaking ad-hoc support duties for the IT team. This includes equipment moves, network or telephone connections, PC build procedures, new user accounts and desktop audits.

"ATM's on-site engineer has played a vital role in the smooth handover and user acceptance of support from internal resources to an outsource supplier," said Gray.

Staff working in the hotels also enjoy prompt software support by telephone for Microsoft Office and Novell Netware. Staff are able to call about the property management systems and desktop applications. If not handled by the ATM team directly, the call is forwarded to the appropriate vendor for action.

"ATM manages all the support calls from start to finish. They monitor the call and make sure that it's resolved within the terms of the different supplier contracts."

If the fault cannot be cleared by telephone advice or remote intervention, an ATM engineer is sent within an agreed response period - as little as four hours. Systems are repaired, rebuilt or replaced as necessary with data being restored from back-ups. Monthly activity reports monitor vendor performance and help Jarvis Hotels make strategic IT decisions.

This level of service adds up to one thing - a one-stop-shop for technical support and more. When a hotel in Crewe was recently sold, ATM decommissioned and reinstalled systems for the new purchaser with less than a day's notice. Another hotel in Scotland lost a server due to a flood so ATM promptly replaced it, installed new software and restored from back-ups. ATM regularly gives hotel staff advice on back-ups and security too.

"ATM understand what the key issues are for our users and there's a good partnership that's built up over several years. They provide us with a cost-efficient service and are a flexible company that's prepared to go the extra mile," said Gray.



New IT investment is the next goal. ATM is now assisting with a major project to find new property management and central reservation systems. It has set up trial sites and provided workshop facilities for testing while another current investigation involves new back-up solutions. It's clear that the right technical support is underpinning Jarvis Hotels' continued success.

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