



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Challenge

- Satisfy the high service expectations of new-style consumers
- Increase occupancy rates, return visits, and new business opportunities
- Improve operational cost efficiency, while taking care to enhance Sheraton's reputation for elegance and excellence

Network Solution

- Cisco Unified Communications has enabled the integration of voice, mobility, high-speed Internet access, and TV entertainment services with existing back office systems—creating one single architectural platform to support the latest smart room technology and luxury hotel experience

Business Results

- Achieved differentiation in an increasingly crowded and competitive marketplace
- Created new experiences and improved services for guests
- Reduced complexity and cost of managing hotel operations and IT
- Increased likelihood of return visits and positive recommendations from guests and industry guides

Enabling Smart Room Technology for the Ultimate Luxury Hotel Experience

Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center Ankara sets new standard for five star service excellence and efficiency.

Business Challenge

Not so long ago, clean bed linen was enough to keep a hotel guest satisfied, but not anymore. Luxury has become the new standard, in order to attract a new breed of discriminating consumer who can search, compare prices, check reviews, and book online—anytime, anywhere. Other lifestyle changes have also started to demand a new level of service. The gym and spa are no longer extras, but essential amenities for health conscious guests, who also expect the latest in-room technology to keep in touch with home and the office. Now, more than ever, hoteliers need to create truly memorable experiences if they are to increase occupancy rates and return visits.

Located in the heart of Turkey's vibrant capital city, Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center Ankara knows this better than most. It has correctly read the market and adapted, taking care to enhance a global brand that is steeped in opulence and grandeur. As part of an extensive refurbishment and convergence project, the hotel has modernized 414 rooms and renewed its lobbies, brasserie restaurant, breakfast hall, clubhouse bar, and convention center.



Christian Brüel, general manager for Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center Ankara, takes up the story: “Our vision was to create a hotel for the future, taking the best that technology has to offer to provide our guests with a differentiated and highly personalized experience. We also wanted to improve the efficiency and delivery of hotel operations, such as front desk, housekeeping, and guest services. Cisco® Unified Communications has enabled us to achieve these goals in record time.”

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– Christian Brüel, General Manager,
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Network Solution

From the minute guests enter the lobby, it is hard not to be impressed by the hotel's striking architecture and contemporary design. But beyond this showcase of modern elegance, technology is hard at work. Cisco Unified Communications has enabled the hotel to bring together voice, mobility, high-speed Internet access, and TV entertainment services and integrate them with existing back office systems onto one single platform.

As guests approach the front desk to check in, a receptionist will greet them, confirm their room, and help ensure that the room phone and TV (which runs over the same Cisco IP network) are changed to their preferred language settings. If they have traveled from another Sheraton Hotel, this discussion will not even take place—the information will have already been forwarded to the Cisco Unified Communications Manager ahead of their arrival.

In all guest rooms and suites, a Cisco Unified IP Phone 7970 acts as a central console that is designed to make each guest's stay as enjoyable as possible. It provides instant access to essential information including maps, city guides, shops, flight

arrivals/departures, and weather forecasts. To help ensure minimum inconvenience and maximum comfort, the IP phone can be used to book wake-up calls, post 'do not disturb' signs, or send automated room service requests.

The handset also acts as a gateway to a host of interactive services. For example, guests can use the color screen display to play games or send and receive text messages and e-mail. In addition, they can share their Turkish experience with friends and relatives using multimedia. By talking into the IP phone, guests can specify an address, record a personal message (as a Windows Media Video file), and then forward it as an attachment via e-mail.

Business travelers will probably want to get online at some stage. With wireless access in every room (and all lobby, bar, reception areas, and conference suites), there is no need to untangle cables or to search for a connection point. Guests do not even have to ring the front desk to obtain a password or access code; all the information that they need to get connected or online is held on their Cisco IP phone.

Unoccupied rooms are serviced with the utmost efficiency, using the same technology. Zeliha Aka, IT manager for Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center Ankara, explains: "Instead of having to carry clipboards, paper, and pens, the cleaner confirms whether the room is occupied or not using a wireless Cisco IP phone. Once inside, the device can be used to record the condition of the room, report any broken items or faults, and order replacement stock, for example, for the bathroom or the mini bar. This data is automatically sent to our hotel management system and actioned straight away."

This 'high impact, low touch' service experience continues right up until departure time. Check-out queues are no longer a problem because integration with the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and billing systems allows guests to use the handset to view their loyalty points/rewards and charges before paying the bill. Guests can also use the IP phone to request the services of a bellboy or order a taxi to the airport.

Business Results

Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center Ankara has successfully differentiated itself in an increasingly crowded and competitive marketplace through the use of intelligent technology. Unified Communications has helped the hotel to create new experiences and improve service for its guests, while also reducing the cost of managing hotel operations and IT. Both guests and staff are now able to access all systems from PCs, laptops, and phones from any point in the hotel

complex. IT and network management (for both room guests and users of the business conference suites) has been simplified and can now be performed more efficiently from one central point.

Zeliha Aka says: "We have combined smart room technology with super-efficient service. Each room or suite is customizable to individual preferences, learning guest habits and anticipating them throughout the stay. Our Cisco wireless network means that our employees can move freely around the hotel. They now spend less time on administrative tasks and more time focused on making sure our guests have everything they need."

This highly automated and on-demand service environment is made possible by the way Cisco Unified Communications allows hotel systems and applications to be integrated onto a single IP platform. Instead of staff having to leave their positions or relay messages around the hotel, the network delivers timely information from those who know to those who need to know. Greater operational efficiency and improved productivity are expected to translate into increased levels of satisfaction—driving not only loyalty and return visits, but also new business through recommendations from guests and independent industry guides.

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– Zeliha Aka, IT Manager,
Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center Ankara

Next Steps

Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center Ankara can now focus on leveraging its investment, for example, through integration of Cisco IP phones with Microsoft Outlook to increase the availability of collaborative tools, such as personal calendars and task lists. Other projects under consideration include the introduction of 'toll bypass', thereby securing additional savings on voice calls

and the integration of building control systems, such as lighting, heating, and security. The architectural platform approach taken by Cisco will also enable the hotel to accelerate the launch of new revenue-generating services, such as digital signage and TelePresence.

Carson Booth, vice president information technology, EMEA Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc. (which includes the Sheraton Hotels and Resorts brand), sums up: “We believe strongly in a robust and secure converged network environment, which is a foundational component for enabling the delivery of innovative solutions to drive a better guest experience, greater operational efficiency for our hotels, and a lower total cost of ownership for our owners. The Sheraton Ankara solution is a great example of how Starwood believes technology can be a differentiator and how we are moving forward to deliver tangible results.”

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– Carson Booth, Vice President Information Technology,
EMEA Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide Inc

Technical Implementation

The hotel's vision of the network as a platform uses an architectural framework that Cisco calls its Service-Oriented Network Architecture (SONA). SONA delivers a framework for enabling network-based services such as security, mobility, and identity to be connected with applications to enable business solutions. This has enabled the hotel to:

- Increase business agility by reusing existing network services
- Reduce costs by utilizing network services across multiple business applications
- Minimize infrastructure disruption while simplifying deployment flexibility
- Increase productivity and efficiency while providing market differentiation

Cisco Unified Communications increases business agility by helping to integrate a wide variety of communications more closely with business processes, helping ensure that information reaches recipients efficiently, through the most appropriate medium.

The solution for Sheraton Hotel and Convention Center Ankara includes three Cisco Unified Communications Managers in the core, which provide centralized call processing for 1600 Cisco Unified IP Phones (Model 7970). Cisco 3845 Integrated Services Routers provide analog and digital voice gateways with Gigabit Ethernet functionality. Around 200 Cisco Aironet® 1100 and 1200 Series Access Points provide wireless coverage throughout the hotel.

For More Information

Cisco Unified Communications:

www.cisco.com/en/US/netsol/ns151/networking_solutions_unified_communications_home.html

Cisco Service-Oriented Network Architecture:

www.cisco.com/en/US/netsol/ns629/networking_solutions_market_segment_solutions_home.html

Product List

Cisco Unified Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager
- Cisco Unified IP Phones (Model 7970)

Routing and Switching

- Cisco 3845 Integrated Services Routers

Mobility

- Cisco Aironet 1100 and 1200 Series Access Points

The Cisco Service Orientated Network Architecture (SONA) services include:

- Unified Communications
- Mobility
- Security
- Identity





Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
170 West Tasman Drive
San Jose, CA 95134-1706
USA
www.cisco.com
Tel: 408 526-4000
800 553-NETS (6387)
Fax: 408 527-0883

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
168 Robinson Road
#28-01 Capital Tower
Singapore 068912
www.cisco.com
Tel: +65 6317 7777
Fax: +65 6317 7799

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV
Haarlerbergpark
Haarlerbergweg 13-19
1101 CH Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www-europe.cisco.com
Tel: +31 0 800 020 0791
Fax: +31 0 20 357 1100

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