

CASE STUDY | QHotels

Enterprise Cellular:

The mobile communications solution of choice for the Hospitality Industry



The Customer:

Founded in 2003 the QHotel Group has experienced rapid growth from 2 to 21 hotels in just eight years and has seen large investment across the entire portfolio.

Each of the unique four-star hotels in the UK has its own individual character and team of welcoming staff. Ranging from countryside retreats to hotels in the heart of the city, each one provides the tailored QHotels experience.

The collection includes five golf resorts, 18 spa hotels and two city centre hotels. The four-star hotels in the UK include iconic hotels such as The Midland in Manchester, The Queens in Leeds and Crewe Hall in Cheshire.



Solution:

After some initial discussions around Wi-Fi and IP-DECT, Arrow Communications brought QHotels to the attention of a new mobile solution, a dedicated Enterprise cellular network from industry leaders Druid Software.

Druid’s Enterprise Cellular Network uses Pi-co-cells instead of Wi-Fi Access Points or DECT base stations which provides coverage for standard GSM mobile handsets, as extensions of the PBX instead of dedicated expensive DECT or Wi-Fi handsets.

Enterprise Cellular promised better cover age and by using standard, low cost GSM

handsets vastly reduced the cost of future handset repairs or replacements.

By employing a Private Mobile solution QHotels could take advantage of all the benefits of a dedicated, on-site GSM network. In addition they could also utilise the flexibility of GSM technology but with no need for mobile contracts with operators and with no voice, text or data charges.

The Challenge:

Like many businesses in hospitality, QHotels relies on a highly mobile team of dedicated staff and communication is crucial. At each site approximately 20-30 staff depend solely on some form of on-site mobile communications for voice and messaging but the current infrastructure badly needed updating.

QHotels decided to embark on a group-wide upgrade of their existing Mitel telephony system to a new IP based Mitel solution. As part of this initiative QHotels decided to review all aspects of its communications infrastructure.

One of major problems that they had been dealing with was an old DECT system. The DECT system had poor coverage and was expensive to maintain due to the constant churn in broken handsets.

QHotels turned to Arrow, its long standing telecoms partner, to see what new and innovative alternatives there might be to DECT and VoWifi, and what would ultimately provide them with the best mobile technology for their large portfolio of sites.



Benefits

The first site to upgrade to Mitel IP and deploy Druid Enterprise Cellular was Ashford International in Kent. This hotel was able to replace 18 DECT base stations with just six pico-cells (cellular radio transceivers), with improved coverage and the substitution of the fragile old DECT handsets with new, inexpensive ruggedised GSM handsets.

Once the system was installed they simply placed the dedicated Druid SIMs into the new GSM mobile devices and the system was up and running.

Staff now benefit from full coverage wherever they are in the hotel using mobile devices of their choice. The more robust mobile handsets have a far longer battery life than the DECT devices and provide staff with the added benefit of the standard handset features such as CLI, text messaging, cameras and even the torch at no extra cost.

Back office Integration

In addition to mobility issues, QHotels also required integration with back office systems, most importantly, the Fire Alarm system.

Druid's open API allowed for the easy integration of the BlueSky Wireless messaging gateway. Fire alerts can now be sent from various locations across the hotels, to the Druid Mobile system and direct to the relevant staffs mobile handsets giving notification of the exact location of the fire.

Dual SIM handsets have also been deployed so that staff that want to can make and receive calls over the Enterprise or Public Mobile Networks.

QHotels plan to roll out Enterprise Cellular across the rest of their sites in the UK, including their flagship site, the Midland Hotel in Manchester (due for completion October 2014).

"The Mitel 3300 system installation with integration to the Druid Mobile GSM Network has exceeded my expectations in both coverage and the extent to which the solution accommodates our needs."

Daniel Kelly, Group Communications Manager of QHotels





Seamless transfer of services

The state-of-the-art Mitel 3300 ICP system integrates fully to the Druid cellular coverage solution, QHotels' Property Management Systems (PMS), Telecom Eye (Call Management) and Protel (Front of House).

The integration between the Mitel telephone system and the PMS means that when a guest checks in, the telephone line to the bedroom is opened up for external calls, call charges can be logged to the correct room, wake up calls can be set, screen pops display the guest's name and room number when calling reception, and room status codes e.g. clean, not clean can be entered by the Housekeeping team from the bedroom telephone handsets.

"Installation was delivered with the highest level of professionalism", says Daniel Kelly, Group Communications Manager of QHotels. "Working with solutions team has allowed QHotels, to focus on its primary activity of providing an efficient service to its valuable guests. The staff at each hotel can now use IP phones and their mobile handsets with all their additional features, helping them to work more efficiently".

"We are so impressed with the range of coverage the Druid Enterprise Cellular Network gives us. We had so many coverage black spots at our hotels with our incumbent DECT system and these areas are now covered with only a third of the cellular access points needed in comparison" says Daniel Kelly.

Amir Malik, Arrow's Telephone System Product Manager comments, "The implementation of pico-cells in this architecture was one of the first of its kind in the UK. We worked closely with Dan Kelly's team, the Mitel engineers and the Druid experts to ensure the implementation went smoothly with minimal disruption to the running of the hotel."

"I think one of the keys benefits for us is the simplicity of using a mobile phone as an extension of our PBX," concludes Daniel Kelly. "Everyone knows how to use one, they are easily available and cost effective." He adds "it makes maintaining and using our mobile communications much more cost effective, efficient and user friendly."

Benefits & Features:

Improved mobile coverage at all sites removing coverage black spots

Reduced maintenance costs through the replacement of the expensive DECT handsets with robust inexpensive mobile devices. With far less radio transceivers required (less than a third Vs the old DECT) which provides better coverage with less cabling

Employees can now choose their own mobile device and by using the phones native features no training is required for full use

No apps required for use providing increased handset battery life over the old DECT

Integration of the Enterprise PBX turning each mobile handset into a SIP ext

Free SMS's

Integration of key business processes to the mobile handset improving enterprise productivity and communication (i.e. Integration of Fire Alarms, Door Alarms and Refrigeration)

Solutions Team:

Enterprise Cellular Solution: **Druid Software** (www.druidsoftware.com)

EMEA Distributor: **Mitel Business Communications** (www.mitel.com)

Systems Integrator: **Arrow Business Communications** (www.arrowcommunications.co.uk)