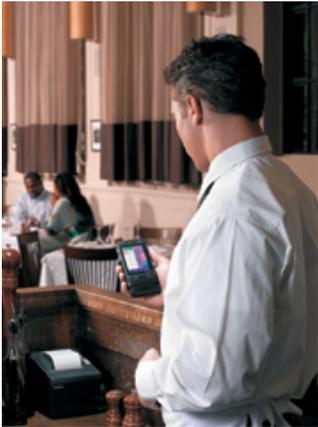




Hospitality industry uses wireless solutions to improve customer experience



Why Wireless?

The hospitality industry faces many challenges today, but the largest one is arguably customer loyalty. In a fiercely competitive market, it is increasingly important to find new ways to keep satisfied customers coming back.

Anything that impacts a guest's experience can affect their brand loyalty. Any time a restaurant or hotel patron has a lengthy wait, customer satisfaction (and so, loyalty) is at risk. Conversely, outstanding customer service can bolster customer loyalty. So how does one minimize negative customer experiences and provide market-differentiating service and amenities? Obviously, hiring the right people goes a long way toward this goal, but giving those talented people the right technology can provide a valuable competitive edge.

With a secure, reliable, application-aware wireless network and the appropriate mobile devices and software, staff can easily perform client transactions wherever they are, such as checking hotel guests in at the curb, expediting valet parking, and placing food orders immediately with the kitchen. They can also access business applications at the point of activity, locate equipment or other staff members, communicate with one another anywhere on the property — and they can do all this while providing guests with wireless internet access. All of these things can enhance the customer experience, helping to build brand loyalty.

Deploying wireless technology can be daunting in an industry that rarely employs internal, on-site IT professionals, but with the right wireless infrastructure and technology partners, a robust, secure mobility-enabling solution designed specifically for your business can be set up quickly and easily.

Technology for the hospitality industry

Motorola, together with leading solution providers specializing in the hospitality industry, brings robust, secure, easily managed mobile technology solutions to hotels, resorts, restaurants, casinos, clubs, cruise ships and sports venues all over the world.

“Using the latest in mobile computing and wireless LAN technology from Motorola, we took efficiency in customer service to the next level.”

Elon Kenchington
Managing Director
Bryant Park Hotel
August 2001

Motorola wireless solutions for the hospitality industry help improve the customer experience.



In a typical implementation, Motorola's RF Management software is used for initial site planning, and with the help of the distribution partner, the cabling and hardware requirements are defined. Motorola then provides the wireless network infrastructure, the handheld computers and the security and management software, while application-specific software can be the customer's own software, software provided by technology partners, or a combination of both. Any additional components (such as mobile printers) are generally procured by the solution provider, who integrates the whole solution.

In a restaurant, this mobile solution means the wait staff no longer needs to drop orders off at the kitchen. Instead, at the push of a button — from the customers' table — each order is printed out at the appropriate station in the kitchen or lounge. Bills are calculated automatically, and credit cards can be swiped at the table, never leaving the customer's sight.

The mobile solution is no less powerful in a hotel setting. Hotel staff armed with a mobile device can check a customer in at the curb or in the lobby, whether as part of standard operating procedure, or as a temporary measure to reduce long check-in lines. They can also print bar coded tags for a guest's luggage being sent to the room or held at the bell desk, order room service at a guest's request, check on laundry or packages, access any back office application or use wireless voice over IP (VoIP) to speak with one another — all done easily and wirelessly from wherever the staff member happens to be.

In both cases, the wireless network and mobile devices allow employees to be more efficient and productive, providing better customer service. Another way that the wireless network can enable better customer service and potentially increase customer loyalty is to provide a wireless internet "hotspot" to guests. This is particularly true in the case of hotels. According to a 2005 study by JupiterResearch, frequent business travelers "tend to stay in hotels that provide free Wi-Fi, at least in the lobby."¹ Motorola's wireless switches and access points allow "provisioning", so you can offer patrons secure internet access on a separate network, while keeping the corporate network on its own secure network — off limits to anyone who

shouldn't have access. And both networks run on the same Motorola hardware, so there's no need to buy additional switches.

Concerned about hotspot administration? With an easy-to-use java applet, Motorola makes it simple for any authorized staff member, such as a desk clerk or barrista, to grant user access. Upon opening a Web browser, the user is automatically redirected to a Web page asking for a user name and password. The user gets this information from the staff member, and is then authorized to use the network connection for whatever period of time you have predetermined.

Mobile hospitality in action

As the Enterprise Mobility Company, Motorola, with the help of its partners, has been helping clients in the hospitality industry all over the world improve efficiency and productivity for years.

In October of 2000, Motorola partnered with Dimex Systems to speed service at Zozobra, a restaurant in Herzliya, Israel. Advantages of the new system include:

- Wait staff can focus their attention on the customers, spending less time interacting with the kitchen.
- Customers are impressed by the method of order entry, reinforcing the restaurant's brand recognition for innovation and service.
- The bill is calculated automatically, reducing the risk of human error.
- Installation and training took only a couple of hours.

Other customers have cited similar benefits, including increased guest count and sales, improved table turns (in some cases, up to 50%), fewer mistakes and reduced credit card fraud because the cards are processed at the table.

Recent restaurant implementations include Comedy Works in Denver, CO, which debuted its first Motorola mobile devices for wait staff in November of 2005, and Club Red in Jonesboro, AR, which announced its Motorola-based POS solution in May 2006.

"Since the Digital Dining software works seamlessly with the Motorola EDAs and the Epson mobile printers, we had first-time servers up and running within three nights — increasing sales during our busiest hours."

Jerry Skelton
Co-owner
Club Red

Factors to consider in a mobile solution

- Site planning, based on desired network coverage, interference, et cetera.
- Applications to be supported
- Required bandwidth — will you use bandwidth intensive applications, such as VoIP? How many devices may access the network at once?
- Hotspot capabilities, to provide secure guest access to the Internet
- Security from hackers and rogue devices
- Ease of monitoring, troubleshooting and day-to-day management
- Quality of service (QoS)
- Roaming capabilities — can you go from one end of the campus to another without losing your connectivity to your application?
- Flexibility to expand
- Locating requirements
- Support for emerging technologies

Both have cited an increase in productivity as well as sales with the new systems. "Since deploying Motorola's PPT8800 mobile computer with the Digital Dining software, our wait staff is more productive, our process is more efficient and food and beverage sales have increased more than ten percent," says Wende Curtis, owner of Comedy Works. In addition to noting increased sales in their busiest hours, Jerry Skelton, co-owner of Club Red has noticed a measurable increase in productivity since each wait person can now handle more customers.

And both Steven Lobel of Zozobra and Jerry Skelton of Club Red believe that their customers also place value in the "cool" factor. Says Lobel, "The integration of Motorola's high speed wireless LAN was essential in giving our customers a speedy service and for Zozobra to establish its position as an innovative restaurant with high-quality service." Skelton echoes that sentiment, "Our customers are tech-savvy, and this technology enhances the club's reputation."

Let's not forget about the hotels. For example, in 2001, both the Bryant Park Hotel in New York City and the Sheraton Hotel in Parsippany, NJ implemented a Motorola-based wireless solution to improve customer service, and in 2003, the Hilton Frankfurt followed suit.

Once the wireless solution was implemented, guests arriving at the Bryant Park Hotel, had a room key in their hands before even entering the lobby. Even more, a private butler on each of the hotel's twenty-five floors, equipped with a Motorola handheld device could now order room service, check on faxes or packages, verify room charges and expedite check out. According to Elon Kenchington, then Managing Director at the Bryant Park Hotel "Using the latest in mobile computing and wireless LAN technology from Motorola, we took efficiency in customer service to the next level."

Deployment of the wireless solution provided a similar story at the Sheraton in Parsippany. The new system gave hotel agents equipped with a Motorola mobile device and a mini-printer the ability to check in guests at the curb, in the lobby or any other location in the hotel over the Motorola wireless network. Handheld devices and the wireless network now allowed staff anywhere on the property to change a reservation, retrieve messages, or perform any other task typically performed at the front desk. A mini PEP (Portable Encoding Printer) can produce receipts and programs room keys.

The Hilton Frankfurt wanted to provide Wi-Fi access to provide staff with secure wireless

access to the hotel management systems, while allowing guests to purchase WLAN access on a separate network. With the help of WLAN AG, Germany's leading WLAN systems integrator, they implemented a wireless infrastructure from Motorola. "The capabilities of Motorola's new technology means that we can set up and administer separate networks, while maintaining security at all levels, be it for guests accessing their corporate networks or for our own internal management network," said Glenn Schreiber, IT manager for the Hilton Frankfurt.

Building a business case for mobility

Constantly striving for improved customer satisfaction is an absolute requirement in the hospitality business. More than just making life easier, it can — and should — have financial rewards as well, although some are easier to measure than others.

Certainly, the value of customer loyalty is well recognized — especially in the hospitality industry, but it can be difficult to quantify. However, Brand Keys, a research consultancy specializing in customer loyalty asserts that:

- It costs 7 to 10 times more to recruit a new customer than to keep an existing one.²
- An increase in customer loyalty of only 5% can lift lifetime profits per customer by as much as 95%.³

In addition to increasing customer loyalty, a Motorola-based mobile solution can have measurable results in increased efficiency and productivity, as well as increased sales.

You'll recall that both Comedy Works and Club Red saw an increase in sales after moving to the wireless POS system — a clear indication that wait staff sell more when they're on the floor than when they're in the kitchen. They're also more efficient when they're not running back and forth to drop off, clarify, or check on orders, add up bills, and process credit cards. When all of that can be done from wherever a server is, substantial productivity increases result. Jerry Skelton of Club Red says,

"Because each server can handle more customers, we estimate that every fourth or fifth server can be eliminated. With the mobile POS we've experienced 18-22% ROI on labor alone — and that's not even factoring in increased sales."

The bottom line is that staff in hotels and restaurants have more opportunities to sell when they're with guests, rather than in a back office or kitchen.

An eye to the future

Motorola constantly strives to improve enterprise mobility. As part of these efforts, Motorola has introduced its Wireless Next Generation (Wi-NG) architecture, which should make hospitality deployments even more robust than before.

Wi-NG architecture offers the superior performance required for mobile hospitality applications. It optimizes voice performance and enables seamless campus-wide roaming across subnets without the need to re-authenticate. Highly scalable, it is designed to offer enhanced security, including advanced intrusion detection tools, making it ideal for even the largest hospitality applications. Wi-NG also lays the foundation to support emerging RF technologies. In the future emerging technologies such as RFID will be supported on the same wireless switch that supports Wi-Fi today. RFID will enable applications such as location-based services and asset tracking, leading to improvements in customer services and supply chain management. Other technologies such as Wi-Max will also be supported on the same platform and will allow enterprises and service organizations to leverage high bandwidth wireless broadband applications.

Working together

Although the implementations discussed here have significant similarities, each is a little different. This is why Motorola partners are so critical. These partners can work with you to define your needs while working with Motorola and Motorola's technology partners to implement the ideal combination of hardware and software for you — quickly and seamlessly.

"With the mobile POS we've experienced 18-22% ROI on labor alone — and that's not even factoring in increased sales."

Jerry Skelton
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Summary

One of the most critical challenges for the hospitality market today is to increase customer loyalty. Among the tools for doing so are a mobile workforce and a wireless LAN. Not only does the WLAN allow staff equipped with handheld computers to bring faster, more efficient customer service to the patron at the point of activity, but it can also provide a hotspot for guests — something research has shown can increase customer loyalty.

A Motorola solution, comprised of a WLAN, network management and security software, handheld computers, industry-specific software from a technology partner, and the implementation expertise of a distribution partner can also increase staff productivity and reduce costs in hotels and restaurants. Increased mobility means increased productivity and increased opportunities to generate revenue.

Motorola-based solutions are secure on many levels: they are 802.11-compliant, Motorola's wireless intrusion protection software (IPS) can detect and isolate network intruders, RF Management software constantly monitors the network to ensure its reliability, and staff using Motorola's handheld POS computers can run a client's credit card without leaving that client's sight.

Using Motorola's Mobility Solutions Platform (MSP) software, the network is easy to administer, and mobile devices on the network are easy to locate.

Certainly, the technology alone isn't the answer, but a Motorola mobility solution can go a long way to helping your staff increase productivity, customer loyalty, and ultimately your bottom line.

For more information about Motorola, The Enterprise Mobility Company, visit www.symbol.com

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- 1- JupiterResearch; Public Wi-Fi, Increasing Loyalty at Hotels; May 13, 2005
- 2- Brand Keys; <http://www.brandkeys.com/whoweare/index.cfm>, under "Why we're passionate about customer loyalty."
- 3- Brand Keys; <http://www.brandkeys.com/whoweare/index.cfm>, under "Why we're passionate about customer loyalty."



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