SOTI

PENINSULA HOTELS

SOTI MobiControl Delivers a Five-Star Performance for Peninsula Hotels

Peninsula Hotels is a prestigious hotel group managed under Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels. Peninsula Hotels has a unique identity among the world's leading hotels. Established in 1928, they operate prestigious luxury properties in ten major cities. These include their flagship in Hong Kong, plus Shanghai, Tokyo, Beijing, New York, Chicago, Beverly Hills, Bangkok, Manila, and Paris. Peninsula Hotels sets their sights high and their standards higher, aiming always to delight their customers.

The Lockdown Challenge

In 2011, the Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels Research and Technology group was tasked with developing in-room tablet-based control systems to manage lighting, heating and cooling systems, drapes and guest information to improve upon its already exceptional customer service. Peninsula Hotels wanted to provide their elite guests with the option of conveniently managing their own guest services. Their intent was to create a solution that could ultimately be deployed in all Peninsula Hotels worldwide. Deploying tablets in all of their guest rooms raised a number of management challenges. The devices required ongoing monitoring and remote management from a central console, and they were to be utilized for hotel-specific purposes only. According to Christopher Chan, Senior Manager R&D, Research & Technology for Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels, "Without centralized management control, we realized that deploying tablets would be extremely cumbersome. Capabilities such as kiosk mode, location tracking and remote monitoring and diagnostics were very important needs for us. It became clear that we would need to find a fully developed EMM solution."

The MobiControl Factor

The R&D group at Shanghai Hotels began exploring the implementation of tablet devices in guest rooms, starting with its Hong Kong property, with plans to expand to its global operations. The key to successful deployment was finding an effective enterprise mobile management (EMM) platform that would allow seamless, centralized control over deployment, software upgrades, device tracking and lockdown.

Chan learned about SOTI MobiControl from Samsung. "We initially went to Samsung to see if we could work together to develop a management solution for the tablet deployment. They introduced us to SOTI, who had a proven track record in the industry, and worked with Samsung before." SOTI MobiControl enables organizations to centrally manage, support, secure and track mobile devices, regardless of the type, platform and location. SOTI MobiControl stood apart from anything else they had looked at.

Vertical: Hospitality
Deployment: Corporate-liable
OS: Android
Mobile Devices: Samsung Galaxy Tablets
Region: APAC

Mobility Challenge

- Managing, monitoring and securing wandering mobile devices in a hotel room setting
- Preventing users from browsing the Web
- Locking device in kiosk mode

Mobility Benefits

Improved Efficiency and Productivity

- Centralized deployment with the ability to remotely deploy apps silently
- Remote access to monitor tablet's status from battery usage to technical issues

Brand Awareness

- Positive public response. Peninsula Hotels is one of the very few hotels to use in-room tablets

Improved Customer Service

- Great user experience with full screen capabilities on the tablets
- Ease of check-in/out

"One of the key things we really liked about MobiControl is that we could deploy apps 'silently'. This was essential since uploading an app to an Android device usually requires user intervention. Imagine if you had 2,000 devices, and needed every person to click okay to deploy an app. That would seriously affect efficiency and productivity."

Christopher Chan, Senior Manager R&D, Research & Technology for Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels

Key SOTI MobiControl Features Benefiting Peninsula Hotels

Kiosk Mode/Lockdown

Peninsula Hotels was able to seamlessly add value to their hotel settings by customizing room tablets with hotel-specific applications that could control room settings such as lights, television and room temperature. With SOTI MobiControl, guests only have access to hotel-approved apps to prevent them from accidentally tampering with the device's core functionality.

Silent Deployment

Peninsula Hotels was impressed that SOTI MobiControl could deploy apps silently. "This was essential since uploading an app to an Android device usually requires user interaction. Peninsula Hotels intended to roll out 2,000 devices and it would be extremely inefficient and counter-productive to manually install the large number of devices required. "That would seriously affect efficiency and productivity" said Chan.

Centralized Administrative Control via a Convenient Web Console

Centralized deployment was especially crucial since application development for their guest rooms is an ongoing process, Chan explains. "With MobiControl we can manage anything from battery monitoring to MAC address checks to accessing information on who handled the deployment on every single tablet." MobiControl also helped with clock synchronization, which allowed Peninsula Hotels to sync up all the tablets in all rooms at the same time.

Ability to Block Access to Unwanted Features

SOTI MobiControl also addressed Peninsula Hotels' need for their app to launch full screen in kiosk mode so that guests could not exit the application. This full screen effect was a particularly compelling point of differentiation for Chan. "Others simply couldn't do that, or were comparatively weaker in terms of security, monitoring and deployment."

Remote Access

While they were very specific about their needs, Chan was pleasantly surprised by the additional capabilities MobiControl had to offer. "We found we could disable cameras, lock certain programs and wipe out icons on the tablet screen. All of this could be done remotely, rather than working with devices one by one. The team has also been leveraging remote access to check in on tablet performance," Chan says. "We can tell if it's healthy or if something is wrong. At any given time we can even determine which technician is working on a tablet, and when."

Location-Based Services

Chan was put at ease with SOTI MobiControl location-based functionality. Knowing where tablets are at all times is very important. This went a long way to improving security and asset tracking. If a tablet leaves a room, Chan and his team can instruct MobiControl to automatically send an alert to security or engineering.

Device Enrolment

With the large number of hotel rooms at Peninsula Hotels, it was imperative that set-up was quick and seamless. SOTI MobiControl enabled Peninsula Hotels to launch and activate all of their tablets with minimal involvement for a successful deployment. "As the organization works on its expansion plans, ease of activation is a key issue" Chan explains. "With MobiControl, it takes only one email to get things up and running, and since we already had deployment experience, it is now even easier!"

The Results - A Platform for Growth

Currently SOTI MobiControl is used to manage all Peninsula Hotels' in-room mobile devices in its Hong Kong property. "We have plans to deploy more systems in our Paris, Beverly Hills and Chicago properties," Chan says. While it's still relatively early to generate return on investment numbers, Chan says one of the biggest benefits has been the public response to in-room tablets. "It's big publicity for us, because very few hotels are using them at the moment. Some are using tablets for video streaming or as eBook. In terms of having a tablet to control lights, we're the only ones in Hong Kong. In-room control features are proving to be very popular with guests. They can even take the tablet with them to another location such as a theatre room to control systems in their hotel room. This has increased our guest's hotel experience immensely."