

# MICROS helps The Observatory Hotel keep up with events



The Observatory Hotel  
observatoryhotel.com.au

### No. of rooms

96 hotel rooms, 6 event spaces



Located in the heart of Sydney, The Observatory Hotel is a multiple award-winning 5-star hotel owned by global luxury brand Orient-Express.

With decor reminiscent of a grand 19th century Australian home, The Observatory Hotel features 96 beautifully-appointed rooms. It is also a popular venue for weddings, conferences and small functions.

Nicole Wilson is the Meeting and Events Manager at The Observatory Hotel. She is responsible for the planning and implementation of the events held at the venue.

"We have 15-20 events here each week on average," Ms Wilson says. "There are six separate function areas, so we often have multiple events running at the same time."

To help them keep track of all of these events, The Observatory Hotel uses OPERA Sales & Catering, which is fully integrated with OPERA Property Management System.

### Taking the hassle out of quoting

When a customer makes an inquiry about a potential event, Ms Wilson is able to look in OPERA to see if that client has made a booking with the hotel in the past.

"If a client is already in the system it means I can roll forward a number of key details to help with the quote. For example, some clients often run the same type of event year after year, so it makes quoting a lot easier to have their previous information on hand."

To complete the quote, Ms Wilson uses the drop-down menus in OPERA Sales & Catering to allocate a venue space based on the number of people, add a food and beverage package, and allocate a minimum spend. She then exports the quote to Microsoft Word before sending it in the most appropriate template to the client.

Given the number of quotes she prepares each week, Ms Wilson appreciates the efficiencies of OPERA.

"I've worked with hotels in the past that don't use OPERA, and you can spend hours manually typing out quotes – rather than the five minutes it might take with the OPERA system."

### Getting the customer's requirements right

When a quote is accepted, Ms Wilson will change the status of the event in OPERA, confirm the availability of the event space, and deduct the inventory from the OPERA PMS system.

"I do all of my accommodation blocks through OPERA Sales & Catering. Having access to both OPERA systems is great – it will tell you straight way if you're over-booking."

After checking for any changes to the quote, she will then export the customer's contract from OPERA, which is automatically produced based on the information quoted.

Ms Wilson says the pre-built options in OPERA, and the ability to extract the information straight from the quoting stage, are valuable time-savers at this stage.

"With the menus, we might offer a three-course dinner that has 10 options for each course. In OPERA you can set up multiple choice options that make it easy to just tick the boxes. You don't have to go in and manually search through all the options."

"It's also great if a conference might have six rooms doing the same thing at the same time. Instead of having to set up the requirements for those rooms individually – which could take 15-20 minutes each time – you can do it once and copy it over five times."

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### Helping events run smoothly

When the event details are finalised, OPERA helps Ms Wilson generate a Banquet Event Order (BEO) which gives the timing and sequence of events.

“We send a copy of the BEO to the client, and to all of the relevant departments in the hotel. This tells the kitchen what food to order, the operations team how many resources we need, the concierge what signage we need etc.”

Ms Wilson says the accuracy of the BEO is extremely important to the success of an event, and she appreciates the role OPERA plays in making that happen.

“The whole process is streamlined by OPERA. Generally, you’ve already put all the information you need along the way, so it’s just a matter of tweaking – which can be done very quickly.”

“Our customers often comment that our BEOs are extremely professional, and they have to be – if we give people the wrong numbers, they get the wrong food or the wrong number of staff.”

### Using reports to manage budgets

Each week, Ms Wilson uses the Daily Catering Forecast to see what business is on the books for the up-coming month, including the confirmation status of each event.

She also uses the Detailed Business Block to see all of the quotes the hotel currently has outstanding, which helps her forecast future demand.

“If a client hasn’t gotten back to us to confirm their booking, this is a great tool for following them up. It’s also helpful for forecasting - if there aren’t many quotes out there, we may need to run specials to generate new leads..”

Another reporting function Ms Wilson uses is Data Extraction. This helps her perform advanced searches through her bookings to find out what she needs to know.

“For example, I might want to search for confirmed bookings that have held past conferences with us over January to March, where we have a contact email address and phone number. It will then bring up a list of potential customers we can proactively contact to offer specials.”

### Making the most of the features available

Having worked with OPERA for around five years, Ms Wilson believes the best way to get the most out of the system is to ensure quality information is fed in from the quoting stage onwards.

“The more you put in, the more you get out of OPERA,” she says. “If all the information is collected accurately and in full at the quoting stage, it makes every step of the process easier.”

To find out how OPERA Sales & Catering could benefit your hotel, please visit [micros.com.au/hotels](https://micros.com.au/hotels)

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