

OPERA helps Rydges achieve strong growth

RYDGES HOTELS•RESORTS

Rydges Hotels and Resorts

Australia & New Zealand

rydges.com

No. of Hotels

40



Rydges Hotels & Resorts has seen both rapid growth and plenty of change over 20 years of operation. Expanding from eight to 26 hotels in its first seven years, the chain now comprises 40 properties in five countries.

By 2007, Rydges was ready for another step forward. Hardware needed to be replaced and operating systems and network infrastructure upgraded in its Australian and New Zealand properties. At the same time, the decision was made to upgrade the property management system (PMS) – the MICROS Version 7 solution, which had been installed in anticipation of Y2K in 1999.

“Undertaking both projects at the same time made the project far bigger,” says Patricia Brennan, General Manager IT. “But at the end of the day, it allowed for other savings in time and cost.”

Over just 12 months, Rydges and MICROS upgraded or installed Opera Property Management System (PMS) at 28 hotels and centrally upgraded systems to the Opera Reservation System (ORS), Opera Customer Information System (OCIS) and the Opera Web Suite (OWS). During this time, Brennan says it wasn’t unusual for there to be installation or training of the new systems occurring in three or four hotels at the same time, while planning or installation was taking place for as many as nine hotels concurrently.

“The logistics of ensuring staff and equipment were in the correct place at the correct time was enormous and the planning that went into the project commenced many months in advance of the first installation beginning,” says Brennan, who describes the period as one of being in “constant project-management mode”.

“I believe that through thorough planning and also extensive testing of all systems, we had a very successful project. Once it kicked off, every hotel experienced a successful ‘go live’ of the new systems on their scheduled date,” says Brennan.

A strong relationship

After working together for 10 years, Rydges and MICROS have developed a strong two-way relationship. The IT team at Rydges is well versed in understanding MICROS products and has persistently tested them, asking for and offering solutions for any improvements that could be made. The outcome of this is that the Opera Enterprise Strategy is a product both companies are happy with.

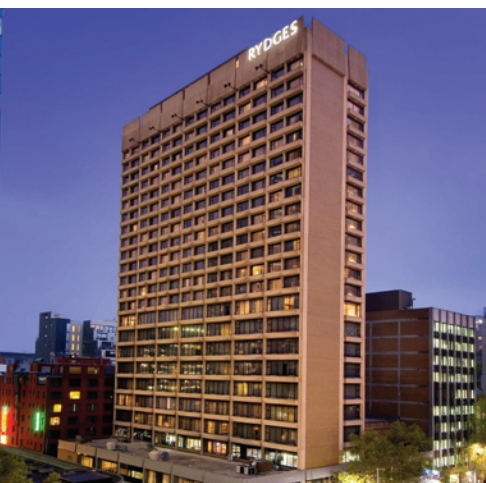
“I guess my team and I feel a sense of ownership of the solutions and we have a very close working relationship with the Australian and Asia Pacific offices, and even a relationship with the development teams in the States,” says Brennan.

For the IT team, going through the process of such an enormous upgrade had great benefits. “We’ve found that support cases for the hotels have decreased and our team no longer spends time patching up failing equipment. Instead, they are able to be more proactive, focusing on improving systems and set-ups, and coming up with future-proof solutions.”

Another benefit is that the Opera system is built utilising the scalability and reliability of Oracle products. Rydges chose to back up their new system with Oracle DataGuard. “This means that should we experience a failure of the hotel server, we have an up-to-date copy of the PMS database that can be brought online for users within 15 minutes. In the past, if there was an outage of this type the hotel would be without the PMS until such time as repairs were affected. We now can offer our users and customers a much more reliable service.

“OWS has allowed us to make rydges.com an easy-to-use, interactive booking portal...It has definitely increased the volume of sales”

Patricia Brennan, General Manager IT, Rydges



Delivering benefits to the end users

A primary aim of all software development is that it be accessible to the end user, in this case mainly the reservations desk, front office and the accounts department. Brennan says, "Opera is a very feature rich system but at the same time easy to learn and use. While I'm sure there are more simple systems available, they wouldn't offer functionality of a similar level."

At the company level, the new streamlined system makes things easier for staff, offers new marketing opportunities and more flexible pricing for the burgeoning online marketplace.

Brennan says, "We are now able to apply the same procedures in all hotels. We now have 29 (soon to be 30) hotels using exactly the same solution. When staff move from one hotel to the other they use the system in the same way, the same reports are available and they are called by the same name."

Keeping track of bookings, availability, regular customers and rates was also made easier when data was synchronised in the new system across 28 hotels. "If a guest has stayed at the hotel previously or has a future reservation, then the guest profile exists in the local hotel database. It is an easy task within the Opera PMS to look up the centralised database for profiles of guests who have not stayed at this hotel, but have stayed at another Rydges hotel. Once the user selects the correct profile it takes only a second or two to download it to the PMS, meaning customers can be recognised for their loyalty across the group rather than just at a single hotel level.

The installation of the Opera Web Suite (OWS) also allowed for an overhaul of the website Rydges.com. Thanks to this product, a simple and effective loyalty program has been implemented and customers can create their own packages for their stay at Rydges. Gone are the days when a hotel website offered you a room rate and nothing more – Rydges customers can select their room rate, add breakfast, a bottle of wine or even a bus trip.

"OWS has allowed us to make Rydges.com an easy-to-use, interactive booking portal," says Brennan. "It has definitely increased the volume of sales online for Rydges."

Moving forward

For Rydges and MICROS, the relationship continues to strengthen. The hotel chain is planning to install Opera Sales and Catering in a couple of hotels later this year. "Rydges are more committed to the use of MICROS' solutions than ever before," says Brennan. "I think a lot of this is due to the people involved in both organisations. There is a level of respect shown to each other and through co-operation we know that we have achieved many wins."

Reservation Summary

Rydges World Square Sydney

Arr: Wednesday, 10 September 2008
Dep: Thursday, 11 September 2008

Check-In: 14:00
Check-Out: 11:00

Modify your Booking

World Square, Sydney

Select a destination

Arriving 10/9/2008 **Departing** 11/9/2008

Adults 1 **Children*** 0 **Rooms** 1

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Rydges Hotels & Resorts currently operates 40 hotels in Australia, New Zealand, UAE, Qatar and United Kingdom. As an Australian-owned company, Rydges are proud to deliver accommodation experiences that are efficient, enjoyable and affordable. With so many parts to their customer journey, delivering a good, great or unforgettable stay often relies on their team using their initiative to do whatever it takes to make the customer the priority.

To find out how OPERA Web Suite can benefit your business, please visit micros.com.au/ows



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