

Marcus Hotels & Resorts Partners with TAPCO to Improve Hotel Guest Experience, Increase Efficiency & Raise Revenue with TIBA Parking Systems

Upset guests and rising maintenance costs at two downtown Milwaukee, WI hotels, the Pfister and Milwaukee Hilton, led the Marcus Hotels & Resorts to replace their outdated parking machines.

Problem:

Parking garages are a valuable service for a hotel to offer its guests, but managing one brings many challenges, especially when it's utilizing outdated technology.

Marcus Hotels & Resorts' Pfister and Milwaukee Hilton parking garages had outdated machines that were breaking down and were no longer supported by the manufacturer. The magnetic strip that operated them was prone to being damaged, basically shutting down the whole system if a customer accidentally jammed a machine.

"If that equipment goes down, it's tough," Director of Asset Management at Marcus Hotels & Resorts said. "You have angry eyes at you and it's always when everyone is trying to leave to go home, go pick up their kids. It never happens when it is only one person in line. It seemed like it was consistently when there is a backup."

Not only were there problems with old machines but the accompanying software was slow and outdated. This

caused the reconciliation process to take far too long. It was constantly crashing and required extensive training to monitor. The limitations of the software meant license plate recognition and tying parking credentials to a room key were out of the question. There was also concern about the security of the credit card payment system of the old machines.

"How long is credit card security going to last?" the Director of Asset Management asked. "How long are parts going to last? Is service cost going to increase over time because we have this system in here that is now obsolete?"

Additionally, personnel were required to run the machines and their supporting software. If an employee's shift could not be covered, then the gate was left open, and no revenue was collected as the hotels didn't want to lock their guests in the garage.

Marcus Hotels & Resorts knew it was time to make a change, so they called TAPCO and explored TIBA Parking Systems.

Before



Outdated Parking Machines at the Milwaukee Hilton. The old machines were causing too many headaches for management.

After



After TIBA Parking Systems installation, the parking garage at the Milwaukee Hilton provide exceptional 24/7 guest experience without breaking down.

Solution:

TAPCO replaced the existing equipment in each hotel with brand new TIBA Parking Systems at the entrance and exit lanes and point-of-sale terminals.

A crumpled, magnetic striped parking ticket no longer brings the entire process to a screeching halt. TIBA prints a scannable bar code for the terminals to read, so a customer can't accidentally jam the machines by inserting unreadable parking credentials anymore.

TIBA's software was integrated with the hotel's computer systems which means faster reconciliation and increased revenue. Parking credentials could be tied to a room key with TIBA's HotelConnect functionality, a step that saves hundreds of hours a year in payment processing, providing a better guest experience.

"I would say there is an 80 percent reduction in reconciliation time daily compared to what we were doing previously," the Director of Asset Management said. "It went from an hour on a bad day to less than 15 minutes."

In addition to increased efficiency, license plate recognition was now possible.

"Monthly parkers absolutely love license plate recognition," the Director of Asset Management said. "It speeds up the process. If somebody doesn't know where their card is they couldn't leave. Instead, this just reads the license plate and the gate pops up."

The TIBA Parking Systems can also generate revenue and current occupancy reports; a capability that wasn't available with the old machines.

Overall, the system took about three weeks to install before it was fully operational, 24 hours a day. TAPCO trained Marcus



TAPCO installed this TIBA Parking Systems Point-of-Sale terminal inside the Milwaukee Hilton location.

Hotels & Resorts' staff on the operation and maintenance of the system so they can troubleshoot any issues associated with managing the parking garage.

The Results:

Marcus Hotels & Resorts said the Pfister's parking garage equipment paid for itself in two and a half years. The garage now runs 24 hours a day and Marcus Hotels & Resorts never has to find someone to cover a shift or depend on a person in the booth to collect money.

"The main cost saving was the labor," the Director of Asset Management said. "Every month when I look at the Pfister and the zero next to the labor line, that was really where automation hit the most."

The previous systems needed constant fixing with increasingly hard-to-find parts, while the new machines rarely need to be serviced.

Hotel guests are extremely happy with the new parking systems. Payments are faster, efficiency is up, and revenues are rising as the system pays for itself.

"With parking, it's one of those things where if it is done right, it's a thankless job. No one is going to thank you for getting in and out of your garage so easily," the Director of Asset Management said. "But the moment something goes wrong, phones are ringing off the hook, people are angry. It all the sudden turns into this incredibly passionate discussion when something goes wrong. The fact that I am hearing nothing, is a good thing."

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