

Historic Hotel Migrates to IP Telephony to Acquire Five-Star Communications Reviews

CASE STUDY

St. James Hotel upgrades its historic infrastructure with the NVT Phybridge switch innovation.

Executive Summary

St. James Hotel
Industry: Hospitality
Location: Red Wing, Minnesota
Number of Endpoints: 250+

CHALLENGE

- 130 year old historical building.
- Infrastructure upgrades could be prohibitively costly and time-consuming given their need to be open 24/7.
- Requirement to not disrupt the building and operations.

SOLUTION

- Ideacom solution powered by NVT Phybridge Power over Long Reach Ethernet switches.

RESULTS

- Leveraging existing infrastructure eliminated all disruptions and risks.
- Secure network with a separate physical path for voice.
- Central convergence of voice and data, ensures quality of service and voice continuity.

PRODUCT LIST

NVT Phybridge PoLRE Switch Series

Recognizing the need for a first-class lodging establishment in the port city of Red Wing, Minn., the wheat-trading center of the world, a group of 11 men established the St. James Hotel, which opened on Thanksgiving Day in 1875. In business for more than 130 years, the hotel still prides itself on delivering cutting-edge amenities to its patrons. With this in mind the hotel, now owned by the Red Wing Shoe Company, was looking to upgrade its communications infrastructure in order to fulfill its mission of delivering service that is second-to-none.

Challenge

Committed to offering its customers the best service possible, the St. James Hotel sought to upgrade its legacy communications infrastructure and begin the migration to IP telephony. Initially, the hotel received a \$60,000 quote to refresh the administrative phones on the property. What's more, the Red Wing Shoe Company occupied corporate offices on the property as well. This meant that if the hotel was going to opt for a traditional migration to IP telephony, one in which voice and data are layered on top of one another, the voice lines would be attached to the company's main data network, presenting a serious security concern.

With 250 phones at one location, decision makers at the St. James Hotel were seeking a quick and cost-effective migration to IP telephony that ensured quality of service regardless of data network loads while also providing voice continuity regardless of data network downtime. But such a migration didn't come without its challenges. The St. James Hotel administration identified a number of LAN-readiness concerns they wanted to address before deciding whether to undergo such a transition, including impact on existing infrastructure, network security, quality of service, physical limitations, costs, interoperability and time requirement.

The four-story hotel had 30-year-old telephony infrastructure running throughout the property, which includes 200 guest rooms, three restaurants and two bars.

Decision makers at the St. James Hotel were introduced to resellers Ideacom Mid-America, including Dale Sebastian, a sales engineer, who presented NVT Phybridge's innovative switches to the team. Ideacom is a leading purveyor of communications solutions in the Minneapolis region, and the company partnered with NVT Phybridge, a manufacturer of switches that deliver power and Power over Ethernet four times further than traditional switches. The switches allow businesses to migrate to IP telephony by leveraging their existing infrastructure rather than having to gut it. After comparing quotes from competitors, the hotel team found that choosing NVT Phybridge would result in at least \$50,000 in savings in this particular instance.

NVT Phybridge's switches also allow businesses to keep their voice and data lines separate at the desktop, meaning reliable data networks don't have to be tweaked during an IP telephony migration. Because of security concerns relating to its corporate data network, the Red Wing Shoe Company did not want IP phones to be layered on its corporate data network, which the hotel already utilized for its data needs, so NVT Phybridge's solutions became more and more appealing.

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In addition to being able to connect the hotel with NVT Phybridge's technology, Ideacom offered helpdesk capability, meaning its customers could call support and technicians could make changes and monitor the voice solution remotely, further reducing costs. Without the separation of voice and data, such a task would not be possible.

Ultimately, the hotel decided to go with NVT Phybridge's solution because Ideacom presented them with a myriad of options and became a trusted advisor.

Solution

After thoroughly explaining the simplicity of how the technology works and precisely how the deployment would be done—and being presented with a financial model that showcased the cost benefits realized with Ideacom and NVT Phybridge—the hotel went forward with its migration to IP telephony in early 2013.

In addition to the cost savings, the hotel chose this particular solution because NVT Phybridge offers a predictable and repeatable deployment methodology across all locations. Since legacy infrastructure is all wired the same way and NVT Phybridge's switches are designed to work specifically with that infrastructure, there are no surprises during the upgrade. The hotel also favored the solution converging in a single location rather than at each desktop. Other benefits the NVT Phybridge solution afforded included a separate path for voice and data and a reduction in second-day management complexity, stresses and costs.

Results

After being told it might cost as much as \$60,000 more and take at least 120 hours to migrate to IP telephony with other companies, the St. James Hotel was pleased to see that the migration was done in eight hours by teaming with NVT Phybridge. Because the company offers predictable solutions thanks to similarity of legacy infrastructure, Ideacom was able to preprogram and setup all components of NVT Phybridge's equipment at its lab, testing everything end-to-end. Knowing everything was working properly, Ideacom then installed NVT Phybridge's switches at the hotel, delivering a great customer service experience.

Thanks to the cost savings that came with NVT Phybridge's innovative switches, the St. James Hotel was able to deploy IP sub-attendant consoles throughout the hotel. This equipment gave customers the ability to take extra calls during peak periods, expanding on the hotel's commitment to provide increased customer service. From an operational perspective, the hotel also enjoyed enhanced productivity and reduced communication costs.

It's been a very positive experience for the St. James Hotel so far, as it has experienced zero call quality issues. The hotel decided to only migrate administrative phones during this initial deployment, but the experience has been so positive that it will be an easy and cost-effective process when the time comes to put IP phones in its guestrooms.

“The customer is so happy, they have already provided some references to some other local companies that we have won,” says Terry Vlach, director of client solutions for Ideacom Mid-America.

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“Together, Ideacom and NVT Phybridge have exceeded our expectations and kept their promises about the smooth and seamless transition,” he says.

When all is said and done, the Ideacom and NVT Phybridge partnership provided the St. James Hotel with instant cost savings and no risk to the security of its data network. In addition, the solution was implemented without a disruption of the hotel’s daily workflow and business activities.

“Ideacom has given the St. James Hotel a pathway for growth and a pathway for the future,” Vlach says. “Hotels typically change their communication platform every 15 to 20 years, so we wanted to get them the latest and greatest features and functionality to last into the future. NVT Phybridge has created opportunities to show our customers increased cost savings, efficiencies and added benefits without the disruption of costly infrastructure changes.”