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The Leela Palace – a place where architecture, luxury and the latest building technologies go hand in hand

Hoteliers throughout the world are facing the need to reconcile short term investments in infrastructure and new technologies with the long term business goals of profitability, sustainability and investor value creation. India is emerging as one of the leading travel destinations, with the World Travel Organization forecasting increases in tourism year on year of almost 9 percent, with some 25 million tourists anticipated by 2015. This poses challenges for Indian hotel owners and operators. A project by Siemens for the Leela Palace hotel in New Delhi illustrates the way in which these challenges are being met, with an integrated approach to energy efficiency, guest comfort, safety and security, and cost management.

Travel and tourism is being affected by the four megatrends of demographic change, globalization, urbanization and climate change. How hoteliers respond to these megatrends, as well as finding ways in which to meet the growing demand and changing and increasing guest expectations, is critical to success. The 16 floor Leela Palace in New Dehli is one of a group of hotels owned and managed by Hotel Leelaventure Ltd, a company established in 1983 in Mumbai. As one of the most celebrated Indian hospitality groups in the five star luxury sector and with numerous hotel and resort properties, meeting guest satisfaction and developing and protecting the Leela brand is key. Located in the diplomatic enclave area of New Delhi, the Leela Palace has 260 guest rooms, several restaurants offering Royal Indian, Modern Japanese, French and Italian gourmet cuisine, and an exclusive spa.

Integrated solution from Siemens

Siemens was appointed to provide an intelligent building management system which integrated a wide range of disciplines throughout the hotel complex, from the fire alarm systems and video surveillance to HVAC control and electrical monitoring. It is this integrated approach which allows the Leela to meet many of its objectives, balancing the needs of its guests by creating ever more

unique guest experiences while also addressing environmental considerations. Tamir Kobrin, General Manager at the Leela Palace, New Delhi, comments – “At Leela Palace Hotels and Resorts, we believe in sustainability. Sustainability is part of the growth of any company. Part of the responsibility of us, as hoteliers and as luxury operators, is to make sure that we find the right balance between the infrastructure requirements and operational requirements that we have, and the systems to make it all come together.”

Siemens has already undertaken some 1,300 energy optimization hospitality projects worldwide, providing integrated, customized energy efficiency solutions which reduce energy usage without compromising guest comfort. Ensuring a measurable return on investment is an important factor in that process, a point recognized by Bhaskar Masineni, Chief Engineer at the Leela Palace – “As part of its environmental initiatives, the Leela Group has defined targets for energy, fuel and water consumption. The technologies Siemens has delivered are reliable and flexible enough to cope with the sometimes extreme temperature differences and humidity we experience here in New Delhi. The systems are fully integrated, yet easy to use and have enabled us to reduce our energy consumption by ten percent over twelve months.”

With energy representing the single fastest-growing operating cost in the hospitality industry, accounting for an estimated three to six percent of total running costs, it is very much a focus. Engaging staff and guests in the process can prove invaluable, not only helping to further reduce energy but also demonstrating that the hotel has a sustainable approach to its business, something which is fast becoming a key differentiator with more environmentally aware customers. Anurag Sharma, Rooms Division Manager at the Leela Palace, recognizes the importance of green guest engagement initiatives – “At the heart of a hotel stay, the in-room experience is a key component of guest satisfaction. From mood lighting to temperature or curtain control, intelligent room solutions from Siemens integrate all areas of room automation to provide guests with total control over their environment at the touch of a button.”

Safety and security for guests and employees

A safe and secure environment is also fundamental in guest expectations and vital in protecting a hotel’s brand. At the Leela Palace, the intelligent building management system features an integrated fire detection and voice evacuation system, along with video surveillance, all managed from a single point in the control room. The Senior Security Manager at the Leela Palace is Col Pawan Bhatnagar who says – “Safety of the guests and employees is at the heart of our operations. We want the guests and employees to feel safe and secure throughout the hotel but without creating an oppressive atmosphere.”

Through the hotel solution provided by Siemens, the Leela Palace has achieved effective cost management by reducing inefficiencies and increasing transparency through integrating the

various elements of the hotel infrastructure. The technologies employed also enable seamless system upgrades and expansion, protecting the investment for the lifecycle of the hotel.

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