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NYC Hilton Garden Inn Taking Advantage of Cutting Edge Technology

Considering new hotel development projects are being canceled left and right or failing to even make it to the drawing board as a result of the recession, it seems logical to assume that this is not exactly the most opportune time for the premier of new hotels touting cutting-edge technology. Somehow, though, amidst the carnage that is the project pipeline, technologically innovative hotels are still being introduced now even in the most unlikely of places, such as the form of the decidedly atypical and advanced **Hilton Garden Inn in New York.**

All the while, though, those administering the cutting-edge technology deployments recognize the fine line they walk now between being able to pursue such projects amidst a recession and being forced to scale back as a result of financial constraints.

“Certainly, there are fewer projects I’m hearing about moving forward now because of the market. A lot of projects on the drawing boards are unable to obtain construction lending and I don’t anticipate those will get funded until the credit markets correct themselves,” observed **Joshua Aaron**, President of technology consultant and deployment firm **Business Technology Partners**. His firm helped formulate what may now be considered the most high-tech select-service hotel in the country in the form of that Hilton Garden Inn on West 35th Street in New York that opened in February.

“So some of the companies we talk to that had been talking about, say, a phone system upgrade, have gone quiet during this period. However, as for the major projects previously funded before the recession, I can tell you I haven’t seen any budget cutting. They’re just moving forward. We were nervous that would happen, but it hasn’t happened.”

In New York, while such a full-service approach via technology is not intrinsic to hotels such as Hilton Garden Inns, the one Business Technology Partners found itself working on nevertheless has become a high-tech select-service hotel—an oxymoron in a world where the latest innovations trickle down the industry segments, beginning in the luxury realm.

Developed by BCRE Services and later sold after its opening earlier this year to RLJ Development, the Hilton Garden Inn’s claim to technology fame is its sophisticated local-area network and wide-area network infrastructure, according to Aaron, which has allowed for an integrated wired and wireless network throughout the property. Aaron added that the hotel also has a “pretty nice telephony solution from Mitel that’s a hybrid system so it can be TDM or VOIP.” But Aaron also explained that the 298-room, 30-story Hilton Garden Inn does not have a fully-converged infrastructure, “but it does have a pretty sophisticated layer three switching and routing network in the hotel and a real nice data center on the cellar level.” Aaron also mentioned that because the hotel was built from the ground up, creating a proper data center and running the right amount of cabling was made easier. The hotel has CAT5E cabling.

BTP coordinated all of the activities of the hotel’s technology vendors and the installation contractors to ensure all of the systems were correctly deployed. BTP also directed the deployment rack and stack of network hardware and designed the hybrid VOIP-enabled system. For the networking infrastructure, BTP integrated the high-speed Internet access, voice and data networks and wireless connectivity that supports both the hotel’s guest services and back office operations.

“Also, the board-room area has an audio/visual system with control systems and video projection screens, so the hotel has a pretty nice complement of A/V,” Aaron added. The presence of such high-tech aspects, of course, begs the question of why the developer would want to invest in such technology for a select-service hotel?

“They were future-proofing it,” Aaron explained, “and they wanted to increase the property’s value over the long-term while also offering guests a higher-end experience.” And no manner of recession can apparently stand in the way of that.