

Installation Profile: Las Vegas Hilton Hotel & Casino

Casino hits with Cobra, Marathon LAN® and Fiber Optic NextLAN solutions



For years, the Las Vegas Hilton Resort and Casino ran every aspect of its hotel and casino's operations on a hodgepogged 4-wire token ring communications network. In a decision that would move the resort from a large and slow network to a state-of-the-art CAT 5/5e, officials selected a NextLAN solution from Superior Essex and Leviton to upgrade the 4-million square-foot facility.

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Las Vegas Hotel & Casino Wins Big with Progressive Network Overhaul.

> Upgrading critical systems is challenging under any circumstances, but in the Las Vegas entertainment industry, where the slot machines are ringing and bright lights are flashing 24 hours a day, implementing a major systems overhaul can be a gamble. Add in a team of in-house electricians unfamiliar with datacom installations, and the potential for chaos rises exponentially. But despite the odds, the Las Vegas Hilton Resort and Casino is pulling it off, training an expert team of installers, and upgrading their 4 million square foot facility from 4-wire token ring to state-of-the-art Category 5/5e in a juggling act so effortless it could headline *Cirque de Soleil*.

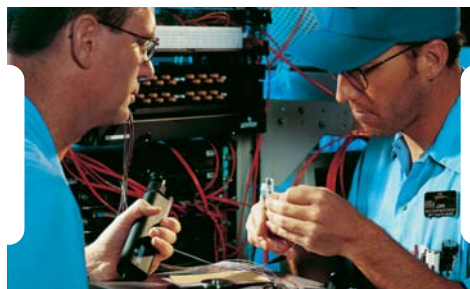
"It's really been an amazingly smooth transition," says Len Forrest, Engineering Systems and Control Specialist. "We've come a long way. Not only have we finished consistently ahead of schedule, but we have done 3/4 of the job on about 2/3 of the money they budgeted for us. And the network is really cleaned up from what it was, before."

Stacking the Deck

Part of the Park Place Corp. hotel network, the Las Vegas Hilton Resort had been limping along for some time on its existing Novell token-ring installation. Explains Forrest: "We'd added on and added on over the years, and eventually just outgrew the infrastructure. It had gotten pretty large and clunky, and was beginning to run noticeably slower."

The hotel LAN, which is also linked to the worldwide network of Park Place Hotels, supports every major aspect of the hotel and casino's operations. The most vital centers of network operation are the business offices and point-of-sale areas: the executive offices; convention sales and marketing; casino marketing; all stores, restaurants, coffee shops and bars; room service; and the employee dining area.

The job must have looked daunting. Phase one alone included 150,000 feet of Superior Essex cable, more than 20 network closets, and 1300 workstation drops. The scope of the project meant Chief Engineer Bill Beshears was faced with some critical decisions early on. Most importantly, could his team of 6 electricians handle the job of rewiring the facility themselves? He knew it made the best



financial sense to use in-house staff, but could they get the support and training they needed to bring the job in on time and on budget? The team had pulled cable before, but that was about the extent of their datacom knowledge.

Beshears, Len Forrest and head of IS Bob Morelos put their heads together. "We knew without communication between IS and Engineering the job wouldn't get done," says Morelos, "but we had a lot of faith in their abilities from the beginning." They worked out exactly what the parameters of the job were, finalizing the CAD design and specifications and determining what they were willing to farm out and what they wanted to do themselves. And then they called their local distributor, Nedco.

"When Bill first told us about the project, we were pretty excited," says Dave "Deuce" Phillips, data representative for Nedco Supply in Las Vegas. "They were wondering how to begin getting their guys trained for voice & data." Nedco was able to help out, explains Phillips, "The job had already been spec'd in as a NextLAN job, with Leviton and Superior Essex. So we just had to get Len's group trained as certified installers." Leviton and Superior Essex offer a Leviton's Lifetime Product Warranty on certified installations of their NextLAN solution, and that certification system is flexible enough to allow training for some in-house technicians, as well as contractors. "Leviton and Superior have got a really solid training and support program," says Phillips. "We knew (Len's team) would be in good hands." Enter Ed Day, District Sales Manager, Leviton's Voice & Data Division. With the assistance of Fiber Field Applications Engineer Pat Courtney, they got the entire Hilton team quickly trained and certified. "The guys really enjoyed it," recalls Forrest, "and we've kept on learning as we've gone on. I was just telling the team today, they are getting to the point where they can take on anything." And of course, he acknowledges, good support is a part of that confidence.

The Solution

With the first round of training done, they were ready for the next step—the actual data change out. The project scope included more than 150,000 feet of Superior Essex Category 5 and 5e and fiber optic cable, and from Leviton: Voice & Data Category 5 and 5e QuickPort connectors, Thread-Lock ST® and SC fiber optic connectors, Category 5 and 5e copper patch panels, Universal 2RU and low-profile 1RU

