

Las Vegas Hilton Hotel & Casino

Casino Hits with Cobra, Marathon LAN® and Optical Fiber NextLAN Solutions

NextLAN[®]
LEVITON[®] SUPERIOR ESSEX[®]



For years, the Las Vegas Hilton Resort and Casino ran every aspect of its hotel and casino's operations on a hodgepoged 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.

performance without compromise

LAS VEGAS HILTON 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.

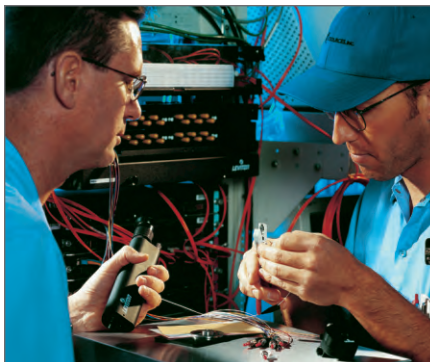
"When Bill first told us about the project, we were pretty excited," says Dave "Deuce" Phillips, data representative for Nedco Supply in Las Vegas. "They were wondering how to begin getting their guys trained for voice & data." Nedco was able to help out, explains Phillips, "The job had already been 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 Fiber Patch Panels, QuickPort and 106-style wallplates and cable management.

"The guys especially liked the fiber terminating" recalls Forrest. "We had some questions at the beginning—because it was totally new to them—but they really liked Leviton's Thread-Lock connectors. They're mechanical and also reusable, so they've got a good learning curve for new installers." The one time the team did need help, he remembers. "Nedco came right over, and brought Pat Courtney in from Leviton. He helped us iron out what we were doing wrong pretty fast."

To keep Hilton business running smoothly, the team decided to set up a flexible installation schedule. “We absolutely had to keep people up and working while we were changing over the system,” explains Forrest. “Which was a big challenge. So we set up shifts from 5am to 1pm. We got most of our work done in the early mornings, and then we’d work in the less populated areas as the day wore on.”



“We started with the executive offices,” Forrest says, “the bosses were really pleased. And then we moved on to accounting and convention sales and marketing. There were six areas in total for the first phase.”

There were a few issues, says Beshears, but nothing that wasn’t quickly taken care of. For instance, he recalled, there were some concerns about old wire and connectors from previous installations. “There was a lot of clean up work,” he recalls.



“Some of the old wire was hard to get out of the conduits,” explains Relief Senior Watch Engineer John Pelissier. “But we cleared a lot of it up. Once we got the closets done and were caught up, we’d go back and pull out the old stuff. Over the years they just kept adding on layers, without the time to go in and take out what was there, so it’s made a dramatic difference, being able to get in and clear out all that mess.”

“Overall, the installation went really smoothly,” says Forrest. “For copper and fiber, both. In fact, the only real fiber trouble we had were some previously installed connectors, not Leviton, that we needed to rework, and a lot of messes from previous installations that had to be cleared up.”

THE RESULTS

Today, with nearly 75% of the job completed at the time of publication, Forrest and Beshears are very pleased by their progress. “The savings has been phenomenal,” says Forrest. “You can’t beat coming in early and under budget. We were

all set with the point-of-sale network a week before the POS people got here.” With the Ethernet project well underway, the team has expanded their scope to include the casino floor, where they are wiring gaming tables and slot machines for fiber. “It wasn’t part of the original plan, but once they saw what the guys could do, they kept adding on projects.” says Forrest. Adds Pelissier,

“It’s pretty amazing when you compare the areas we haven’t done to the new ones. The difference is dramatic, and it’s a great feeling of accomplishment for the guys.”

“We just tried to take a very simple approach to the whole project,” says Forrest. “If we were unfamiliar with a new product or technique, we’d train up the guys and be good to go. And the fact is, with the support we’ve gotten, and a really amazing team of guys, we haven’t found anything yet that we haven’t been able to handle.”

Morelos is happy with the installation from the IS perspective as well. “We can go to Engineering now for maintenance of wiring, which we couldn’t do before. And we don’t have to wait around for recertification. Engineering and IS are working together, and it’s made things much easier for everyone.”

And they’ve all been pleased with the level of support they’ve gotten from Leviton, Superior Essex and Nedco. “We’ll definitely go with NextLAN for future work,” says Forrest. “It’s worked real well for us. We’ve been really happy with everything Nedco and the manufacturers have done.”

And the word of the project’s success is beginning to spread. Already the Las Vegas Hilton has had a lot of visitors from other divisions and hotels in the Park Place group.

“Everyone’s been very, very impressed,” says Forrest, with a smile. “They’ve been calling up to ask how we got started.”

NextLAN[®]
LEVITON[®] SUPERIOR ESSEX[®]

HIGH PERFORMANCE CABLING SYSTEMS



Superior Essex is one of the largest manufacturers of communications cable products in the world, and a market leader in datacom copper and optical fiber cables. With more than 50 years of experience in telecommunications cable design and production, Superior Essex Communications has built a reputation for delivering products that lead the market in terms of technology and quality. From Outside Plant (OSP) to in-building LANs, Superior Essex cables carry the voice and data traffic for the largest telecommunications service providers in the world as well as many of the leading enterprises throughout North America. Visit SuperiorEssex.com/Comm to learn more.

Superior Essex Communications LP

6120 Powers Ferry Road, Suite 150
Atlanta, GA 30339
800.551.8948
SuperiorEssex.com/Comm



Leviton Network Solutions is part of Leviton Manufacturing, Inc., a 100-year-old company offering more than 25,000 products and devices for homes, businesses and industries. Today, the division is dedicated to producing network infrastructure systems for the enterprise, data center, government, health care, education, and residential markets. Copper, fiber and power solutions include structured cabling systems, enclosures, PDUs and much more. All Leviton products are engineered to exacting standards and offer guaranteed performance. For more information, visit Leviton.com.

Leviton Network Solutions

2222 222nd Street SE
Bothell, WA 98021-4416
800.722.2082
Leviton.com



NextLANsystems.com

© 2010 NextLAN Systems. All Rights Reserved.

9/2010