

How Seattle Hotel Replaced a 15-Year-Old Legacy PBX Without Interrupting Operations

Crowne Plaza Seattle Downtown by IHG

A Think Simplicity Case Study



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REPLACING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IS NEVER EASY

For a **419-room downtown Seattle hotel**, those concerns were amplified by the size and complexity of the property.

Crowne Plaza Seattle-Downtown relied on a communication environment that had served the hotel **for more than 15 years**.

While the system remained operational, critical components were beginning to show their age.

PMS integrations were **becoming unreliable**, hardware was aging, and multiple standalone systems required ongoing maintenance and coordination.

The hotel knew modernization was necessary. The challenge was making the **transition without disrupting daily operations or the guest experience**.

THE CHALLENGE: AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

The hotel's **legacy Mitel system** had been in place for about **15 years**.

The most significant **challenge** involved **PMS integration**.

Guest names were no longer appearing on phones.

Housekeeping and room status functionality had become unreliable.

Rebooting systems could temporarily restore functionality, but the underlying issues continued to return.



The infrastructure was still functioning—but it was becoming harder to justify the risk of relying on aging technology for critical operations.

“The old system was 15 years old, so it was time.”

PMS INTEGRATION

The Oracle Hospitality logo is displayed in white text on a solid red square background. The word "ORACLE" is in a bold, sans-serif font, and "Hospitality" is in a slightly lighter, sans-serif font below it.

The biggest concern was ensuring a successful **integration with Oracle Opera PMS.**

A failed integration can impact guest information, room status updates, call handling, and daily operations across the property.

According to the hotel's executive:

“Anytime you install a new system that has to interface with Opera, that’s always my greatest fear.”

The 30-year hospitality executive, who has overseen multiple technology projects at this property expected challenges.

Instead, the installation became one of the smoothest upgrades he has experienced.

Several months after the installation, the executive reported:

“We haven’t had any issues with the Opera interface. Everything has worked as we expected.”



WHY THINK SIMPLICITY WAS SELECTED

The hotel selected Think Simplicity because of its ability to provide:

- **Cloud-based** communication platform
- **Proven** Opera integration
- **Consolidated** system architecture
- **Hotel-specific** functionality
- **Responsive** support
- **Minimal disruption** during installation

Just as important, **Think Simplicity's team worked closely with the hotel before installation** to develop a detailed deployment plan and identify potential challenges before cutover.

A THREE-DAY INSTALLATION

Because the property operates 24 hours a day, **minimizing guest disruption was a top priority.**

The project included:

- **Network and VLAN configuration**
- **Phone deployment**
- **Opera PMS integration**
- **System testing**
- **Staff onboarding**
- **Final cutover**



Guest interruption was minimal, *if any.*

After overseeing multiple phone and technology deployments throughout his career, the hotel executive described the project simply:

“This one was way smoother.”

FROM MULTIPLE SYSTEMS TO ONE UNIFIED PLATFORM

Before the upgrade, the hotel's communication environment relied on multiple separate systems working together:

- Phone switch
- Voicemail server
- Call accounting server
- Multiple PMS interfaces

Each component required maintenance and created additional points of failure.

The new communication platform **consolidated these into a single cloud-based** environment with one Opera PMS integration.

This simplified system management, **reduced complexity**, and created a more modern communication architecture for the property.



OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

Instead of managing multiple servers and interfaces, the property now operates from **one consolidated cloud-based platform**.



- ✓ Replaced a 15-year-old Mitel PBX
- ✓ Maintained Oracle Opera PMS integration
- ✓ Completed installation in three days
- ✓ Minimal guest disruption
- ✓ Consolidated communication systems into one platform
- ✓ Improved front desk call handling
- ✓ Added voicemail-to-email functionality
- ✓ Simplified ongoing system management

AFTER THE UPGRADE

Stable PMS Integration

Guest information and communication now operate reliably.

Improved Front Desk Operations

Incoming calls ring across all front desk extensions. Front desk staff can also transfer calls to reservations with a single button.

Voicemail-to-Email

Receive voicemail messages directly via email.

Simplified System Architecture

Multiple legacy servers and interfaces consolidated into a single unified platform.

Responsive Support

The system is managed remotely, allowing post-installation adjustments, configuration changes, and support requests to be handled quickly, and without on-site visits. Minimizing disruption and costs to hotel operations.



MODERNIZING HOTEL COMMUNICATIONS *WITHOUT* DISRUPTION

Large-scale technology upgrades are often associated with downtime, disruption, and unexpected complications.

For Crowne Plaza Seattle-Downtown, *this experience was different.*

The hotel **successfully replaced a 15-year-old** communication environment, maintained Opera integration, modernized infrastructure, and completed deployment with virtually no guest disruption.

The hotel executive credits the installation team's preparation and expertise:

“Everybody I worked with knew what they were doing.”

Reflecting on the overall deployment experience, the hotel executive said:

“Overall, it was seamless and smooth.”





ONE THING THEY WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY

Looking back, the hotel executive's biggest takeaway was simple:

“Had I known it was going to be this smooth, I probably would have pushed a little harder to do it sooner.”

Like many hotels, the property waited until aging infrastructure made replacement unavoidable.

The experience demonstrated that **communication modernization does not have to be disruptive**, risky, or complicated when the right plan and the right partner are in place.

Final Takeaway



For larger hotels operating on aging communication infrastructure, the **biggest challenge** isn't replacing the system.

It's managing the *risk* of change.

Crowne Plaza Seattle-Downtown proved **that risk can be managed.**

The upgrade was completed with virtually *no impact* on guests through **careful planning, experienced installers, and reliable PMS integration.**

Today, the hotel spends *less time* managing its communication system with ongoing updates and support handled remotely.

Ready to Explore What's Possible?

Every hotel is different, but the goal is the same:
fewer vendors, fewer headaches, and one accountable partner.

Whether you're replacing a legacy phone system or simply exploring your options, we're happy to answer your questions about what a modern hotel communication service could look like for your property.

👉 **See What It Would Look Like for Your Property**



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