



Grosvenor Casinos Bet on Ascom

The UK's largest chain of casinos, Grosvenor Casinos, owned by Rank Gaming Limited, part of the Rank Organisation, has embarked on a major investment programme in anticipation of the change in the UK gaming laws. Grosvenor are developing several prestige new casinos whilst others are being refurbished.

To improve its operation, Grosvenor realised that a change of its telephone systems were required. To ensure the casino ran as smoothly as possible, the telecoms system needed to include a mobile solution for management and supervisory staff, full integration with all departments of the casino from the office to the kitchen and to provide data capability for internet access and e-mail.



Artists impression of the new Hard Rock Casino opening in Manchester, June 2002.

Bill Harbron, IT systems manager at Rank Gaming says, "Part of the day to day running of a casino always involves resolving disputes between the customer and a croupier by the Pit Bosses or other supervisors. We wanted a system that would significantly reduce dispute delays by allowing the croupier concerned to be able to have immediate contact with the Pit Bosses. During a dispute the customer or group of customers are unable to continue playing and this can also cause embarrassment and frustration. We wanted to eliminate this, so we could handle any issues quickly and efficiently providing our customers with a good quality service."

Grosvenor Casinos awarded Ascom the contract as it offered the most suitable and adaptable solution with the Ascotel ISDN telephone system. Ascotel incorporates everything from DECT (Digital Enhanced Cordless Telephony) telephones for the mobile staff and 'Hot Keys' for quick calls to the Pit Boss for croupiers, within a fully integrated system. Ascotel provides an efficient communications system for all aspects of the casino, from reception, kitchen, bars and lifts through to the main administration office. Ascom also

provided full project management, installation and ongoing support services. With AIMS (Ascotel Information Management Software) Ascom's Service Centre is able to provide on site and full remote system and diagnostic support, including remotely programming system changes, even changing feature keys on individual DECT cordless handsets as and when required.

In addition, Grosvenor Casinos has converted its exchange lines to ISDN to optimise line usage and reduce costs. All calls, faxes, email and internet access are routed through the Ascotel system using DDI (Direct Dial In), via the Basic Rate ISDN lines, improving efficiency and speed and enabling Grosvenor Casinos to rationalise the number of different lines connected to the site, thereby significantly reducing the overall line rentals.



Cordless Communications Enable a Quick Response

As the Pit Boss or other supervisor is always required to sort disputes between the customer and croupier,



Ascom recommended that all supervisory staff and the Pit Bosses should carry an Office 130 DECT handset with belt clip, to ensure that they can always be contacted. With this method, many queries can be handled immediately over the telephone, however if the dispute is more complicated the supervisor can be briefed on the problem while walking to the customer, so is in a position to make an immediate resolution as soon as he arrives at the table.

Hot on the Case with Hot Keys

Before the Ascotel system was installed, the croupier had to call different extensions until he/she found who they needed. Apart from being time consuming this often caused the customer some degree of embarrassment. With the Ascotel system, croupiers now have phones with hot keys programmed in so at the touch of a single button the croupier can call the Pit Boss or supervisor straight away. The trial in the Luton casino showed a reduction of dispute delays from an average of 10 minutes to between 30 seconds and three minutes, resulting in a 15% increase in takings!

Headsets add Professionalism

Headsets were also provided with each Office 130 DECT cordless handset for the croupiers and other supervisory staff. The headsets provide a more discreet method of making the necessary call to deal with a dispute. In addition, the headsets have an answer/hang-up button that can be pressed to answer or hang up a call without the need to unclip or handle the phone.



A Phone for Every Situation

The wide range of Ascotel Office handsets has allowed Grosvenor to configure the system accordingly. From one piece Office 10 handsets for the kitchen and bars to lightweight Office 130 DECT handsets for mobile staff including headsets for croupiers to the more featured Office 30 and 40 terminals required for the office where demands for the telephone are quite different.

Bill Harbron says of the Ascotel system, "We now have a telephone system that has enabled us to run a smooth and professional operation. Dispute delays have been drastically reduced and we have been very impressed with the Ascotel systems performance. Each installation by Ascom has gone very smoothly and we have been very impressed with the level of service we have received from the service desk upwards."

Mike McFadyen, sales manager of the Communications Systems Division at Ascom, says, "It was clear that Grosvenor Casinos needed a specialised solution and the Ascotel DECT solution was the ideal answer. We were able to integrate all their diverse communication requirements within one system. With the Ascotel ISDN system we were able to tailor-make a solution, which can be quickly and easily adapted as required. With a number of terminals, add-on devices and applications, the Ascotel system is a very flexible and reliable product, certainly a system worth betting on!"

A summary of the benefits

- DECT cordless phones mean croupiers can quickly and easily contact the Pit Boss or supervisor at all times, wherever they are, drastically reducing dispute delays, which has resulted in increased profits.
- One touch 'Hot Keys' allow croupiers to call who they need at the touch of a button, further reducing dispute delays.
- Increases security as supervisory staff do not have to leave the gaming areas to make or receive calls, they are always at the centre of the action keeping a watchful eye on the gambling.
- Headsets on each DECT handset allow for more discreet telephone calls improving privacy and reducing customer's frustration.
- A wide range of digital Ascotel Office terminals available meant there was a suitable telephone for every section of the casino.
- AIMS software allows Ascom to enter the system remotely to provide support if necessary.