Designing, supplying, implementing and managing an entire IT Infrastructure for a new, major London casino

Spanning four floors in the landmark historic Grade II listed building in Leicester Square, London, The Hippodrome was originally built in 1900 and staged a large number of world leading performances, revues, plays and musical comedies before being completely refurbished in 1957 by Charles Forte and converted into the pioneering cabaret restaurant "The Talk of the Town". After years of neglect and many proposals for its future, Hippodrome Casino Limited - experts in the gaming and hospitality arena - was finally granted permission and more importantly, a license, and in July 2009 work started on a £50m re-development project to restore The Hippodrome to its original glory and transform the site into an international style casino

Accommodating future growth and delivering optimum performance

Scheduled to open in summer 2012, plans for The Hippodrome Casino's extensive renovations included the design, implementation and management of a completely new IT infrastructure to support all aspects of the business.

When open, the building will house not only the casino areas, but private and open plan gaming spaces, cabaret staging - playing host to acts of all genres - and of course, casual and formal dining and drinking areas, along with a roof terrace with gaming tables. With plans to open 24/7, customer numbers estimated at 1200 per week and around 400 staff, the IT infrastructure was paramount to ensuring a smooth running operation.

Philip Mitchell, Head of IT at The Hippodrome Casino, had previously been with London Clubs International and had worked closely with high availability IT infrastructure solutions specialists CSG on a complex project to design and implement an effective disaster recovery solution that would guarantee business. Recalling the success of this project and CSG's ability to implement solutions with minimal disruption, on time and within budget, Philip invited CSG to submit proposals for an IT infrastructure that would be highly efficient, accommodate future growth, deliver optimum performance and provide redundancy in the event of a system failure or environmental disaster.

"In addition to CSG, we also asked several other specialist IT solutions organisations to evaluate our immediate and long term objectives and submit proposals for a fully managed and supported solution," explained Philip Mitchell. "CSG's proposals were by far the most cost effective and would give us the business critical capabilities and facilities that we needed. This, combined with CSG's track record of implementing and managing complex IT infrastructures, and my experience of working with them on previous projects, meant that we had found a partner we could trust and rely on."

Project Summary:

CSG was invited to submit proposals for a highly efficient IT infrastructure for The Hippodrome Casino that would accommodate future growth, deliver optimum performance and provide redundancy in the event of a system failure or environmental disaster.

Working closely with the internal IT department and stakeholders, CSG used their CSG-360° practice to undertake an in-depth analysis of the IT requirements and, following demonstrations and technology trials, implemented a VMware based virtual infrastructure and provided on-site training and knowledge transfer services to ensure that The Hippodrome Casino's IT team could manage and monitor the infrastructure internally.

"CSG has, once again, demonstrated its expertise, knowledge and experience and we continue to work in partnership with them to maintain and enhance our infrastructure."

Philip Mitchell
Head of IT
The Hippodrome Casino

Case Study: Hippodrome Casino

An IT infrastructure to manage the entire operation

Working closely with The Hippodrome Casino's internal IT department and stakeholders, CSG used their CSG-360° practice to undertake an in-depth analysis of the organisation's IT requirements, addressing application sizing, data storage and data growth expectations, whilst considering business continuity and disaster recovery scenarios.

The planned IT infrastructure would be required to run everything from the HR systems, accounts and general office through to the electronic gaming, door entry and game usage, customer loyalty programmes and gaming applications – a diverse requirement by any IT specification. Paramount to the success of the IT infrastructure was the ability to store securely, back up, replicate and restore quickly and efficiently all data, including customer data, usage monitoring, trends, game profiles and demographics, as well as the processing of money in and out within the casino.
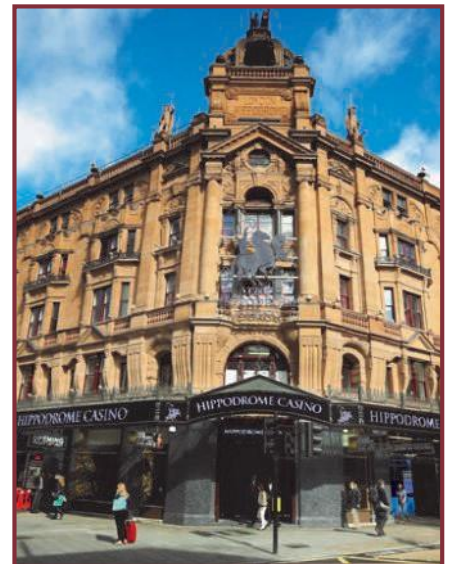
CSG-360° practice: a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of the IT infrastructure

Developed by CSG, the CSG-360° practice is a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of an organisation's IT infrastructure utilising CSG's in-house expertise in the design, implementation and support of Server, Storage, Security, Backup, Connectivity, High Availability and Disaster Recovery environments. Coupled with its partnerships with the leading IT vendors, CSG is able to advise and deliver the best possible impartial advice and options appropriate to the client's technical, business and budgetary requirements.

Following the analysis, CSG recommended that The Hippodrome Casino implemented a VMware based virtual infrastructure across a number of HP DL380 hosts, with a NetApp FAS2040 SAN to provide data storage, Barracuda for Web Filtering and Data Backup, and Cloud Replication to ensure business continuity. "In addition to a fully comprehensive IT infrastructure that would deliver the optimum performance, one of The Hippodrome Casino's main requirements was for a highly resilient architecture that would safeguard data and allow for operational continuity in the event of a major failure," continued Jason Clark.

Proving the concept

In principal, The Hippodrome Casino accepted CSG's findings and proposals but given the mission critical nature of the planned investment, asked for demonstrations and technology trials. "This was a major investment for The Hippodrome Casino and although CSG had our complete confidence, we wanted to see the proposed technologies and solutions in a live environment," explained Philip.

Utilising CSG's development centre, the technologies were trialed and demonstrated to The Hippodrome Casino stakeholders, ensuring that the solution successfully addressed any outstanding issues or queries. Satisfied that the proposed solution would meet immediate objectives and provide the flexibility to accommodate future growth, The Hippodrome Casino engaged CSG to proceed with the implementation phase of the project. Working in close partnership with the Casino's internal IT department, CSG's consultants installed, configured and tested the new infrastructure, providing on-site training and knowledge transfer services to ensure that the IT team could manage and monitor the infrastructure internally, whilst CSG provided overall system monitoring and managed IT services to ensure the on-going availability, security and resilience of the system.

A trusted partnership

Now live, The Hippodrome Casino's new and highly resilient IT infrastructure is delivering features, functionalities and capabilities that exceed expectations. "The CSG designed and implemented IT infrastructure has proved to be highly efficient, delivers optimum performance and provides redundancy in the event of system failure or environmental disaster," concluded Philip. "CSG has, once again, demonstrated its expertise, knowledge and experience and we continue to work in partnership with them to maintain and enhance our infrastructure."

The deployed technologies include: