

Mobile warriors at Resorts World



PHOTOS: MALCOLM KOH FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

Mr Rai Jitendar, 52, a driver of the limousine service at Resorts World Sentosa, demonstrates how he receives assignments via his Samsung Omnia II. These include details such as pick-up venue and time, destination and the guests' names. RWS also introduced an IPTV in-room entertainment system in each guest room (below)

GRACE CHNG checks out the technology that drives the resort's limousine service

He has been driving chief executive officers and VIPs around for 33 years and Rai Jitendar, 52, has always been kept on his toes. He must never stray too far from the office in case his bosses have a last-minute trip to make. He must also complete paperwork every day, which includes filling in the distance travelled for each trip.

These days, he can acknowledge his transport assignments, clock distance travelled and even get his customers to give feedback on his service on his Samsung Omnia II cellphone.

A limousine management system by his employer, Resorts World Sentosa (RWS), handles driver assignments over the 3G network.

Jitendar receives assignment sheets with details like pick-up venue and time, destination and guests' names.

Guests can acknowledge that they have arrived at their destination by signing on the phone and provide feedback by answering a short survey. This data and information about the distance travelled, which the driver has to key in, are captured by the system.

"This is a good system, it frees me from the paperwork after each trip," said Jitendar, who drives guests in one of the two Rolls Royce Phantom that RWS has as part of its limo service.

He added: "I get accurate information and I can attend to last-minute requests better. The touchscreen Omnia II is also easy to use."

The limo management system integrates a



number of technologies: 3G, general packet radio service (GPRS), global positioning system (GPS), the Windows-based fleet management system and the Geographical Information System. These allow the location of RWS' fleet of luxury cars to be accurately monitored via a Web portal.

It replaces the traditional way of using white boards to write names of drivers, pick-up times, venues and guest names.

With the new system, drivers are automatically alerted to incoming requests. They can quickly acknowledge the request and communicate with hotel staff via their phones.

Assignments are given to drivers based on the location of the limousines. This lets RWS optimise its resources.

Yap Chee Yuen, RWS senior vice-president and head of IT, said the new service has improved limo scheduling and reduced waiting time for guests.

He said: "Mobile technologies like 3G, GPRS and GPS used in the limo management service improve the productivity of the drivers and give us the immediacy needed in the scheduling of limos. There are fewer errors."

The limo management service is one of three services that RWS has outsourced to telco SingTel for \$21 million over seven years, beginning this year. The other two are an

in-room entertainment system and a location-based service.

Keeping guests entertained

RWS is planning to develop its own mobile app this year which guests can download into their cellphones. This location-based app will provide information on attractions, conventions, shows and other services via SMS or MMS at pre-defined locations, said Yap.

The in-room entertainment service uses Internet technology to provide video and audio entertainment as well as Internet services. This is an extension of the resort's use of Internet Protocol (IP).

The in-room entertainment system uses the latest video compression technologies like MPEG4 and H.264 encoding, which let the hotel offer high-definition and DVD-quality movies and other content on demand. RWS plans to offer online shopping as part of its in-room entertainment system.

The resort sends content to all of its LCD and video screens located throughout the resort via IP, hence doing away with the need to have staff go to different locations to change posters or signboards.

High-speed wireless access is available in hotel rooms, convention centres and other guest areas.

Said Yap: "The whole resort uses IP. We have an IP-based phone system in the hotels and offices. Our surveillance cameras are also on IP. It means less cabling which is easier for us to manage. It also means savings because we roll out only one cable system."

The use of IP has reduced capital costs as well as allowed updated information to be provided across departments which RWS staff can use to provide personalised service, he added.

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