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IN-ROOM TECHNOLOGY

Peninsula Beverly Hills Ups In-Room Revenue

BY CATHY URELL

BEVERLY HILLS, CA— In keeping with its reputation for pampering guests, The Peninsula Beverly Hills has a state-of-the-art system for in-room entertainment.

The 196-room luxury hotel uses the NXTV Broadband Entertainment System, which was first installed in 2001 and has been periodically upgraded.

"Basically every month since then we had increases in revenues from it," said Ellis O'Connor, executive assistant manager at the hotel.

When it was first installed, the system generated revenues of \$12,000 to \$14,000 per month, according to O'Connor. "Now, those revenues are between \$25,000 and \$26,000 monthly," he said.

The system delivers digital movies licensed from Hollywood studios via a pure digital signal to the guest's television. The technology allows for exceptional quality, according to O'Connor, and enhanced features including pause, fast-forward, reverse and bookmark which allows guests to stop and re-start movies over a 24-hour period.

"The system gives customers control over what they watch and when they watch it," he said.

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Guests at The Peninsula Beverly Hills can see the latest releases as a result of the entertainment system's digital rights agreements with major Hollywood studios, O'Connor noted. "It gives [it] an edge over their competition," he said.

The company has agreements with Dimension; Disney; DreamWorks; HBO; MGM; Miramax; New Line Cinema; Paramount Pictures; Universal Studios; and Warner Bros.

"The company looks for the most recent releases and they have really embraced the system. About 65% of our guests are repeat customers so many of them have used the system on previous visits and when they return, they want to use it again," O'Connor said. The hotel's clientele includes "the captains of industry, CEOs, government leaders and some celebrities," he said.

On a recent stay at another hotel, O'Connor said he viewed a different system that is available "and it was a second-rate experience in terms of the quality of the picture and the offerings. We feel what we have is the best available," he said.

Along with "a good selection of movies, there is free television provided by DirecTV, which is completely digital. We have also bundled in Internet service and have a hotel page so guests can check out or view their bill. It is linked to our website so they can also book rooms at our other [Peninsula] hotels," O'Connor said.

As for disadvantages with the NXTV system, he said, "The only issue we had was with the remote control but they are bringing out a new version that is



The 196-room Peninsula Beverly Hills now generates more than \$25,000 in monthly revenue from its in-room entertainment system.

more powerful and user-friendly."

Other in-room entertainment options at The Peninsula Beverly Hills include Bose radio, CD and MP3 players, and a VCR.

"As we are a five-diamond luxury hotel, we endeavor to offer guests what they have at home like the high-end Bose surround sound and 30-inch plasma televisions," O'Connor said.

Along with the in-room entertainment, other features of the guestrooms at The Peninsula Beverly Hills are state-of-the-art. For example, rooms have electronic bedside controls for the air conditioning and lighting. The controls can also be used to illuminate a do-not-disturb button on the guestroom door and to cut off the electronic doorbell.

Additionally, the bedside panel can be used to summon housekeeping and for turndown service. "When a guest indicates they want maid service, a light goes on in the housekeeping office and a room attendant will be dispatched," O'Connor explained.

Guestrooms at The Peninsula Beverly Hills also feature private fax machines; international direct dial telephones with dual lines and voice mail; minibars; in-room safes; and executive-style desks.