

Case Study: Kalahari Resorts & Conventions

Samsung Hospitality TVs and LYNK REACH Make a Big Splash at Waterpark Resort



Overview

Customer Need

Kalahari Resorts and Conventions needed a new generation of hospitality TVs and management technology to meet the changing needs and expectations of guests. The TVs needed to provide easy connectivity to guest devices like tablets and streaming devices and be resilient to harsh conditions at Kalahari's indoor waterpark. The management technology needed to centralize support and content delivery so that the resort could quickly and easily deliver unique entertainment experiences.

Samsung Solution

Kalahari deployed over 1,500 Samsung Hospitality TVs throughout its Pocono Mountains resort in the guest rooms, cabanas, bar, and lobby. The 48-inch and 65-inch TVs integrate with Samsung's LYNK Remote Enhanced Active Control for Hospitality (REACH) solution, which enables centralized management over coaxial cable including channel line-up changes, remote diagnostics, and in-house channel content.

Results

The Samsung Hospitality TVs have helped Kalahari create a unique and differentiated guest experience. The TVs provide guests with multiple content streams including easy connectivity with their own device. In the waterpark cabanas, the TVs deliver reliable viewing in a living room-like setting. The LYNK REACH technology minimizes service calls and enables the resort to showcase promotions and events on all displays.



Kalahari Resorts owns and operates Africa-themed properties in family vacation hotspots including Wisconsin Dells, Sandusky, Ohio and Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Named after the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa, the resort's namesake theme is applied throughout its guest rooms, indoor waterparks, restaurants, bars, and spas.

The Pocono Mountains resort is the latest addition to the Kalahari portfolio with 457 guest rooms and suites. Accommodations range from two-room family suites to two-story standalone buildings equipped with five bedrooms, a recreation room, full bar and nine TVs.

According to Condé Nast Traveler magazine, Kalahari operates "the world's coolest indoor waterparks." The Pocono Mountains property has a massive 100,000-square-foot indoor waterpark with a retractable roof, a lazy river, and dozens of water slides. Families can take a break from all the water fun and relax in private pool-side cabanas.

When phase two is completed, the property will have nearly 1,000 guest rooms and will be the largest indoor waterpark in the United States.

The Customer Need: A Next Generation Hospitality TV System

When Kalahari began planning the design of its new Pocono Mountains resort, company experts studied the trends in guest usage and preferences for in-room entertainment. "We saw that traditional in-room programming was going the way of the old traditional room phones, which few people use anymore," says Greg Gogola, Kalahari corporate director of IT. "Our guests needed to connect their own devices to watch content on the TVs. They also wanted easier menu navigation that they are already familiar with on their home TVs."

Kalahari also needed to expand digital engagement beyond the hotel room and into the resort's entertainment areas to help drive F&B and other revenue streams. "We have waterpark cabanas for daily rental," says Cary Brandt, corporate creative director of entertainment at Kalahari. "We wanted to provide a high-quality TV viewing experience so families and friends could lounge there all day and enjoy the food and beverages."

The cabana TVs needed to be reliable and hold up to the humidity around the waterpark.

In the bar and lobby, Kalahari wanted to entertain guests with unique, themed content that connected to the brand experience and transported guests to another continent.

Brandt also wanted to use the house channels to do more than just show static information about the property. "We wanted to use the TVs to showcase special events, daily activities, and promotions and needed a content management and delivery system to easily reach our guests no matter where they were," says Brandt.

Finally, the Kalahari needed a centralized solution for managing the TV content and programming. "We were going to build a mega resort, and didn't want to have our engineers and support staff having to visit every guest room whenever there was a channel lineup change," says Gogola. "We also needed high-quality, reliable TVs that would require minimum support or repairs."

The Solution: Samsung Hospitality TVs LYNK to the Future

After evaluating several TV brands, Kalahari selected the Samsung Hospitality TVs and LYNK Remote Enhanced Active Control for Hospitality (REACH) solution.

The resort teamed with American Hotel Register, ALMO and Judge Group, a national system integrator, to plan and deploy more than 1,500 48-inch 670 Series TVs and 65-inch 890 Series Smart TVs throughout the Pocono resort's guest rooms, cabana lounges, bars, restaurants, and lobby.

Samsung Hospitality TVs deliver a premium viewing experience at a cost-effective price. Regular rooms have two TVs while the large suites have up to nine TVs. The fully-featured TVs include Connect Share to enable guests to connect devices over USB and HDMI ports.

The TVs also feature volume limiters, lock-out controls, hotel channels, and USB cloning. The display pedestal stand rotates with optional 20, 60,

and 90 degree stops for maximum flexibility and optimal viewing from anywhere in the room.

In order to centrally manage the TV infrastructure, Kalahari installed Samsung's REACH platform. The REACH server and remote controller enable the updating and adjusting of the TVs over radio frequency (RF) signals. "We can now easily control the standard volume levels on our TVs and change our channel lineups from a centralized location," says Gogola. "That's a huge win for us because we were never able to do that before Samsung."

Samsung's LYNK REACH also enables Kalahari to program and change channels to take advantage of promotions within the hotel. For example, when a celebrity makes an appearance at the resort, a message can be sent to guests over their TVs to promote the visit and invite guests to come for autographs.

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LYNK REACH®



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The Results:

Providing Unique Viewing Experiences Throughout the Resort

The Samsung Hospitality TVs are enabling Kalahari to create a truly unique vacation experience for guests and conventioners. “To us, they’re not just TVs, they’re video wallpaper that we can use all over the resort to delight guests and give them memorable experiences,” says Brandt.

For example, four 65-inch Samsung Smart Signage displays are mounted side-by-side in the main bar. During the day, they display African wildlife scenery. In the evening, the displays create a virtual rock concert. Each display shows a different musician singing or playing an instrument. The content is synchronized so that all four artists interact simultaneously to create a concert that appears to be live. “At first, we thought the videos

would serve as background music, but instead, people gather and watch them as if it’s a real concert,” says Brandt.

In the hotel rooms, guests can watch cable programming with interactive program guides. Or they can connect their own devices to stream movies or play games. “Guests have been really happy with the in-room TVs,” says Gogola. “Many guests already have a Samsung TV at home, so they just expect that quality in the resort.”

Managing a fleet of 1,500 TVs has been easy with the reliability of the TVs and the LYNK REACH platform. “The Samsung TVs simplify management and make it easy for our maintenance teams and staff to focus more on the overall guest experience,” says Gogola.

Based on the success at the Pocono Mountains resort, Samsung has become the standard TV solution for all Kalahari properties. As older TVs at the Wisconsin Dells and Sandusky properties are retired, they are replaced with new Samsung TVs. And future properties will be equipped with Samsung.

“We are very excited about what we can do in the future with Samsung,” says Brandt. “Working with the Samsung technology has opened new possibilities that will take the guest experience to a whole new level and it wouldn’t be possible without Samsung.”



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