

EPICOR®

Focused on Growth

Epicor Hospitality and Entertainment
Customer Success Stories





A close-up, profile view of a man with dark hair and a light complexion, smiling as he looks at a laptop screen. He is wearing a light-colored, possibly pink or lavender, button-down shirt. The background is a blurred stone wall.

Hospitality

Few industries are more competitive than hospitality. Hotels, restaurants, sports teams and recreation companies are continually looking at ways to attract customers, build loyalty and refine operations to drive growth and improve profitability. Epicor's hospitality solutions provide a comprehensive suite of applications and tools including complete property management (PMS) and POS, cash and sales reconciliation, and supply chain management, along with integrated back office capabilities for financials, analytics and business intelligence. The following pages include just a few of our many success stories.



“Our primary business is baseball, but every department supports the team in some manner. Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment plays a key role in our success supporting the organization.”

— Bill Waters
Director of Finance
Chicago White Sox

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Chicago White Sox

Industry

Sports/Entertainment

Headquarters

Chicago, IL

Employees

125+ Employees

Epicor solution

Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment

Business Challenge

Replacement of antiquated financial management system that was not able to provide the flexibility needed by the organization

Solution

Robust accounting management solution with flexible reporting capabilities

Business Benefits

- User-friendly interface
- Reports can be easily modified
- Dramatically improved data entry efficiency and accuracy

“Since we implemented the Epicor solution, the time spent generating company-wide financials for establishing annual budgets has gone from three to four weeks, to three to four days.”

— Bill Waters
Director of Finance
Chicago White Sox

In the summer of 1994, the White Sox sought to replace its antiquated financial management system, which wasn't providing the flexibility their organization demanded. The search was narrowed to three solutions by management, who then presented them to the accounting team for consideration.

“Finding a solution with strong reporting and budgeting capabilities was critical, but we also wanted to be sure the end-users could work with the solution,” said Bill Waters, director of finance for the Chicago White Sox. “We found that the Epicor solution could provide the functionality we required, in a user-friendly format that appealed to the end-users.” Chris Taylor, accounting manager with the Chicago White Sox, added, “We liked that the screens in the Epicor solution could be modified to match our business processes.”

Driving Efficiency Down the Line

Since implementing Epicor, the White Sox organization has experienced improved efficiency in its reporting and budgeting processes through dramatic time-savings and increased accuracy. Previously, information had to be taken from the general ledger and re-inputted in a different system in order to generate reports. “With Epicor, we can report directly out of the system. The reports can be modified and the data easily manipulated, as needed,” said Waters. “This has dramatically improved our efficiency and accuracy.”

Using Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment, the White Sox have seen dramatic improvements in gathering company-wide financials for creating the annual budget. “Since we implemented the Epicor solution, the time spent generating company-wide financials for establishing annual budgets has gone from three-to-four weeks, to three-to-four days,” said Waters.

The White Sox operate on zero-based budgeting, which means for each fiscal year, its departments are required to re-justify the necessity of all expenditures. According to Waters, this necessitates financial information that is precise and accessible. “We are able to provide department directors with a detailed report on their past year’s budget pretty much on-demand.”

Waters continued, “Because our budgeting process is so detailed, the level of performance we are able to provide is only as good as the information we can get out of the Epicor system. Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment delivers the functionality to track and maintain a breadth of financial data, and the flexibility to leverage the information how we need it and when we need it.”

In addition to streamlining its internal budgeting, the Epicor solution has helped the White Sox simplify its reporting to Major League Baseball (MLB). According to Chris Taylor, “Major League Baseball has very complex and stringent reporting specifications for its teams, requiring a variety of financial reports throughout the year.” The White Sox leveraged the flexibility of the Epicor system to build these reports into the system, which helps them plan better and enables a significant time-savings.

“Prior to implementing Epicor, creating reports for MLB would take as much as three or four days. Now it takes a matter of minutes,” said Waters. “Furthermore, as MLB modifies its reporting rules, we are able to adjust the reports in the Epicor solution quickly and easily to remain in compliance.”

Leveraging Functionality for Optimal Performance

The White Sox continue to find new ways to leverage the functionality in Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment to further enhance back office processes. “The more we get to know the Epicor solution, the more we find we can do with it,” said Taylor.

Recently, the White Sox connected Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment with its ticketing system to drive efficiency even further. According to Waters, “If we’re in a play-off series and sell tickets for a game five, but win the series in four games, we have to issue refunds for those ticket holders.”

By connecting the Epicor solution with its ticketing system, the White Sox can pull ticket-holder information into Epicor to process the refund, then transfer the data back into the ticketing system so ticketing agents have a complete record of the refund, down to the check number. “This way, we get the refunds out faster, which makes our ticket holders happy,” Waters added.

Creating a Team Environment

With the success of the White Sox implementation of Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment, other Chicago-based sporting-related entities including the United Center, Bismarck Enterprises, the Chicago Blackhawks, and the Chicago Bulls, have followed suit and implemented the solution. The entities meet regularly to discuss how each group is using the Epicor solution, to share ideas among group members, and to find out what processes are working for each group.

For the Chicago White Sox, the activity off the field contributes to the momentum on the field. “Our primary business is baseball, but every department supports the team in some manner,” said Waters. “Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment plays a key role in our success supporting the organization.”

Consolidated Restaurant Operations

Industry

Food Service

Headquarters

Dallas, TX

Employees

6,000+ employees

Epicor solution

Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment

Business Challenge:

Disparate systems and manual processes created unneeded cost and inefficiencies

Solution:

Highly functional and customizable hospitality solution

Business Benefits

- Ability to maintain low G&A through solution automation and integration
- Integration with line of business solutions creates added efficiency
- Tier-one comparable solution without expensive implementation or maintenance expenses
- Flexible solution adopts to growing business without increasing corporate headcount

“Using Epicor, our management is getting accurate information on a timely basis which allows them to better manage cash flow and profitability.”

— Dave Seebeck
Vice President
Information Technology

Consolidated Restaurant Operations Inc. (CRO) operates more than 100 corporate locations, 27 franchised and 23 joint venture casual-dining restaurants. With brands that include Spaghetti Warehouse, El Chico, Good Eats, Cantina Laredo, Lucky's Café, Silver Fox Steakhouse, Ill Forks Steakhouse, and Cool River Café, CRO has a long history of continued success in the highly-competitive and tight-margined restaurant industry.

CRO manages most of its processes at the corporate level—which means a tremendous amount of operational and financial data from its various restaurants must be tracked and compiled. Formed through a series of acquisitions and poised for growth, CRO found that the use of disparate systems to manage this information was creating unneeded cost and didn't provide timely access to information to make better business decisions. As CRO reached the turn of the century, the company sought to implement a single solution to be used that could eliminate manual processes and effectively manage corporate and restaurant information while still allowing the company to operate with a lean staff.

“In the restaurant business, we are tied to very tight margins. It's critical that we accomplish as much as possible with as little as possible,” said Dave Seebeck, vice president of information technology at CRO. “We wanted a solution that would enable us to align operations on one platform, streamline our processes and would allow us to double in size without having to replace the system.”

In its search for a solution, CRO considered a wide spectrum of solutions from different vendors, ultimately chose Epicor for its functionality, scalability and integration and customization capabilities. According to Seebeck, larger vendors like Oracles® PeopleSoft and SAP are not a good fit for CRO. “The large tier-one vendors require a significant amount of resources to implement their solutions. We don't have the money to pull consultants in to do lengthy, complicated implementations,” said Seebeck. “Epicor provided tier-one comparable functionality in a solution that enabled us to get up and running quickly without draining financial or human resources.”

Streamlining Processes through Tight Integration

For CRO, the integration and customization capabilities of the Epicor solution were essential. “We are a best of breed shop, and we require tight integration to line of business solutions,” said Seebeck. Information is collected from the restaurants daily via a tight interface with CRO’s point-of-sale (POS) system, Aloha, and fed into the Epicor Enterprise back office solution. In addition, the company is able to feed labor from its UltiPro human resources solution and sales and revenue information into Epicor Enterprise to create regular the profit and loss (P&L) statements for its managers. CRO is also leveraging the Advanced Allocations and Electronic Funds Transfer capabilities in the Epicor system.

Through the centralized and inter-company capabilities of Epicor Enterprise, “Information is automatically uploaded from the store-level at the end of each day,” said Seebeck. “Our store level people can operate in their world knowing that the necessary information is getting to corporate. Instead they can focus on providing great food and great service.”

The tight integration also creates a wealth of information which CRO corporate and restaurant staff can tap into to help with budgeting and strategy. “With so many brands across the country, we have diverse needs for managing and leveraging our financial and transactional data,” said Seebeck. “Epicor Enterprise allows us to pull a broad range of reports including budget-to-actual summaries for each of our concepts, plus individual store operations expenses and twelve month rolling Profit and Loss statements.”

Further capabilities have been uncovered on the budgeting side. CRO has been using Epicor Active Planner to create a top-level budget, but wanted to get more granular in its management of store-level operations. “We wanted to get better control of the store performance and be able to manage store by store instead of at a concept level,” said Seebeck. “This year we plan to use Epicor Active Planner to create a store-level budget for each of our ninety-eight stores.”

Keeping Costs in Check

Using Epicor Enterprise has enabled CRO to automate manual processes and become more structured in management of corporate and store-level data. The company has kept general and administrative expenses (G&A)—specifically headcount costs—low as a result of the efficient infrastructure built around Epicor. According to Seebeck, this is critical to the company’s success. “As tough as the restaurant business is, when you can shave points off of the G&A it’s a tremendous help,” he said. “Epicor gives us the ability to do a lot with a little.”

In fact, accounting and payroll processes for the entire company are managed by eighteen people, and one IT full time employee supports the entire solution. “For a \$250 million business, that’s a significant accomplishment,” said Seebeck.

A key example of the automation capabilities is seen in the integration between CRO’s store-level systems and the Epicor system. “Our store managers key in invoices and feed them into accounts payable via Epicor so they can be paid. Previously, this required re-keying of information,” said Seebeck. “This is just one example of how we’ve been able to streamline our workflow and business processes using Epicor.”

Going Forward

Next, CRO plans to implement Epicor Procurement to further enhance and streamline their back-office processes. “Epicor Procurement will allow us to compare purchases to a budget,” said Seebeck. “This will be very helpful in managing CapX expenses.”

With an eye toward growth in the coming months, Seebeck is confident that Epicor will be able to accommodate their needs. “The Epicor solution goes back almost thirteen years with CRO,” said Seebeck. “Our Spaghetti Warehouse concept was running Epicor prior to our acquisition of them. The other CRO concepts were operating on another platform. We were able to see the success Spaghetti Warehouse had with Epicor which made it easy for us to select them as our back office solution for all concepts. The longevity of the solution in the organization is a testament to its reliability. It has and will allow us to operate effectively now and in the future.”

Orient Express Hotels Ltd.

Industry

Hospitality

Headquarters

London, England

Employees

6000 Employees

Epicor solution

Epicor for Hospitality

Business Challenge

To streamline the entire financial process and to consolidate 147 separate company accounts and databases into a single system for accurate currency conversion and stock market reporting considerations

Solution

Deployment of a remotely hosted, consolidated Epicor solution to reduce operational costs while improving reporting time cycles and accuracy

Business Benefits

- Hosted implementation was able to reduce operational costs through a single instance of the global solution
- Moved from time consuming manual consolidation to a real-time system to improve operational visibility
- Provided extensive support for language, localized accounting and operational procedures, and currency conversions for operations in 40 countries
- Drastically reduced the reporting cycle while maintaining mission critical accuracy
- Enhanced ongoing support services allowing reduction in internal IT costs, staff recruitment and retention requirements

"The project has been deemed a success and as more of our individual hotels and businesses renew their local accounting systems, it is likely they will also move to a common Epicor based solution."

— Gary Franklin
Head of Finance
Venice Simplon-Orient Express, Ltd.

Since its founding in 1976, Orient-Express Hotels Ltd has provided luxury travel experiences for discerning travellers in areas of outstanding cultural, historic or recreational interest. With 2006 revenues of \$492.8 million, the group is an expansive global hospitality business with interest in 40 countries across the world.

With a diverse and expansive hospitality portfolio including hotels, restaurants, trains and cruise ships—Orient-Express Hotels Ltd has strived to maintain accurate reporting in a challenging operational environment. Preparing accounts originating from 147 companies, operating in 40 countries communicating in over 20 languages is a challenge many accountants would find overwhelming.

Orient-Express Hotels Ltd originally purchased Epicor Financials from Epicor Software Corporation in September 2004 starting with a General Ledger and Accounts Payable implementation for its UK-based companies. The decision was part of a re-alignment of IT operations following a floatation of the Orient-Express Hotels Ltd on the NYSE.

Following the success of this initial project, the Group began a consolidation of accounts from around 130 companies across the world to Epicor's General Ledger module with various customized reports for the board reporting pack and required for the US stock exchange published from there.

In 2006, the relationship with Epicor continued with a new hosted platform coming online to allow the Group to benefit from outsourced IT management, including maintenance of

customizations and Microsoft SQL Server database administration services. As Group hotels, restaurants and luxury travel businesses upgrade accounting systems—Epicor is now the preferred global supplier and an ongoing process of migration continues.

Luxury Spanning the Globe

Orient-Express Hotels Ltd is a hotel and leisure company providing luxury travel experiences for discerning travelers in areas of outstanding cultural, historic or recreational interest. Founded in 1976 when the company acquired Hotel Cipriani in Venice, Orient-Express Hotels Ltd owns or has investments in 49 businesses: 39 highly individual hotels, two restaurants, six tourist trains and two river cruise operations, operating in 25 countries worldwide.

The company believes that discerning travelers will choose a famous individual property in preference to a chain brand, so none of its businesses is called Orient-Express except the renowned Venice Simplon-Orient-Express luxury train which operates through Europe, linking London, Paris and Venice. Some of the Orient Express magical collection of luxury hotels and resorts around the world include renowned Hotel Cipriani in Venice, Hotel Splendido in Portofino, the Villa San Michele in Florence, the Mount Nelson in Cape Town, the '21 Club' in New York and the Observatory Hotel in Sydney, Australia. Orient-Express Hotels, Ltd. continues to seek out unique properties with expansion potential and introduce new experiences, restoring romance, glamour and style to international travel.

On an operational level, the diversity of the Orient Express portfolio combined with legal, monetary and accounting practice differences which span its global business makes for a challenging accounting and IT hurdle.

As Gary Franklin, Head of Finance and Development for Venice Simplon-Orient-Express Ltd explains, "Support for local or country-specific accounting practices and the ability to consolidate reports was a major consideration for us when we looked for a replacement for our previous enterprise solution back in 2004. The incumbent solution had been inherited from our previous parent company. However, a new independent status fostered a desire to build a solution more suited to an international organization with a diverse range of businesses.

"We looked at a number of possible vendors including JD Edwards and Microsoft Dynamics GP, but Epicor was the best fit both in terms of our initial UK operation and in respect to our future plans to consolidate our global business accounting

practices," Franklin added.

"Our previous solution was also reaching end of life and had problems with reporting—requiring lengthy and time-consuming batch preparation to deliver reports. In addition, the diversity and geographic distances between Orient Express operational sites prompted the Group to look at a remotely hosted solution. By effectively outsourcing hardware and software maintenance and taking advantage of WAN access technology, the group could drastically reduce operational IT costs while maintaining strict security on sensitive financial information."

"The process of implementation was a substantial task," comments Franklin, "which we managed to complete in just under six-months and the changes were immediate." Reports that had taken days to prepare would now be available in just a few minutes and individual changes that would normally require manual changes were tailored in the system to further reduce tedious process management.

"The flexibility of the Epicor solution allows us to make extensive modifications to the financial models of our different businesses based on local requirements, and then consolidate all the information to a central point for reporting to the board and SEC."

The centralized nature of the key Epicor Financial system has allowed the Group to add on more functionality and in 2006, they implemented the Epicor Distribution modules, to manage their inventory, purchasing and sales orders for consumable gifts and memorabilia from their world famous luxury tourist trains.

Throughout 2006, Franklin and his consultants from Epicor made small changes to the system to improve reporting efficiency and help generate new views on the databases to provide more specific information for strategic planning. The Group also took advantage of two more Epicor Managed Service offerings with Customization Maintenance and SQL Server Database Administration services. It was decided that to give Orient Express Hotels Ltd the most flexibility the hosting of the entire solution would be outsourced.

For 2007 and beyond, Franklin believes that more of the group will move to a common Epicor infrastructure, "The project has been deemed a success and as more of our individual hotels and businesses renew their local accounting systems, it is likely they will also move to a common Epicor based solution."

Hyatt International, Inc.

Industry

Hotel

Headquarters

Chicago, IL

Employees

35,000 Employees

Epicor solution

Epicor iScala Hospitality

Business Challenge

Proprietary back office application lacked breadth of functionality and globalization capabilities required for multi-national hospitality company

Solution

Robust hospitality back office solution with integrated financial, operational and reporting features to support global company

Business Benefits

- Streamlined financial management operations with global localization, multi-currency, and multi-language capabilities
- Established real-time financial and operational reporting to track daily cash, bank and revenue management and reconciliation, reducing daily cycle times by over one hour
- Increased overall system integrity to meet controls compliance
- Created effective and efficient data sharing between corporate office and subsidiaries worldwide
- Tighter controls and audit-ability enabling better cost-management across inventory, food and menu costing, and requisitioning processes

“Epicor iScala Hospitality is now the only recommended back office system for Hyatt International Hotels and Resorts.”

— Gebhard Rainer
Senior Vice President
Global Hyatt Corporation

Around the world, Hyatt is one of the most recognizable names in hotel and resort management and development. There are 210 Hyatt locations worldwide. Hyatt International Corporation operates, manage or franchise 90 hotels and resorts in 39 countries, with an additional twenty-three hotels under development. Hyatt Corporation operates, manage, franchise or lease 122 hotels and resorts in the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean.

With its vast cultural and geographic diversity, Hyatt International must manage property management systems (PMS), point-of-sale (POS) information, along with financial data from its multi-national locations. For nearly two decades, Hyatt International utilized in-house, proprietary front and back office systems at the majority of its properties. As the company expanded, the legacy systems could not adapt to the company's changing needs, and Hyatt International was faced with the choice of updating its current system or moving to an outside vendor.

“We needed a solution that could provide robust financial management functionality along with the ability to function in multi-language environments and in more than thirty currencies,” said Gebhard Rainer, senior vice president for Global Hyatt International. “We chose Epicor iScala Hospitality for its flexibility, platform, multi-lingual and multi-company capabilities, and because of the company's strong global presence, we knew they would be able to support us effectively.”

Working Toward a Centralized System

After a successful beta test of Epicor iScala Hospitality at the Hyatt Regency Almaty in Kazakhstan, Hyatt deployed the solution at four properties throughout Germany providing a centralized, fully-integrated back office management software with real-time access to the financial and operational data among all four of the hotels.

"After seeing the success at the sites in Germany, we negotiated a global corporate agreement to have Epicor iScala Hospitality rolled out to a number of properties in Europe and the Middle East," said Rainer. "Epicor iScala Hospitality is now the only recommended back office system for Hyatt International Hotels and Resorts."

Hyatt is currently utilizing Epicor iScala Hospitality, part of the Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment solution, at forty-three Hyatt International locations. The remaining sites are scheduled to be rolled out by the middle to end of 2006, enabling consistency of product and platform across its properties. The solution provides Hyatt with the necessary global localization, traditional and commissary inventory management, analysis of product mix and food costing, requisitioning and standard hospitality reporting capabilities.

Epicor iScala Hospitality provides consistent and streamlined financial and operational processes and has enabled tighter controls and audit-ability to better-manage costs, as well as easier and timelier access to data within each property.

Connecting Information across Continents

Epicor iScala Hospitality can be rolled out within each property location or in a centralized shared services model. Hyatt International's locations in Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Australia, New Zealand and India benefit from the use of a centralized back office solution. Within the centralized environment, regional offices are able to run online, customized and comparative reports between the different regions and hotels.

Epicor iScala Hospitality is equipped to handle complex localized tax structures and multi-languages allowing local staff to deal with the back office in their own language with flexible account structures to meet the local requirements.

Utilizing user-friendly interfaces, Epicor iScala Hospitality seamlessly integrates Property Management Systems (PMS), Point-of-Sale (POS), and financial accounting systems, eliminating time-consuming double and manual entry functions. "With the integration between Epicor iScala Hospitality and our on-property systems, we have witnessed a complete re-engineering of our processes which has streamlined operations," said Rainer. "In addition, we have gained greater buying power and increased our efficiency and productivity."

In addition, Hyatt International now has the ability to generate up-to-the-minute reports through Epicor iScala Hospitality including daily profit and loss statements while also having immediate access to inventory through the solution's stock management processes. "The ability to run daily P&L (profit and loss) statements has enabled our managers to be proactive in managing their expenses proactively," said Rainer.

Improving and Measuring Business Processes

With Epicor iScala Hospitality as the standardized back office solution for its operations worldwide, Hyatt International is looking at leveraging the solution to connect other elements of its business and further improve business processes. Based on the strategic goals of the company and standard industry measures, Hyatt International has a set of measurements that enable management to be more pro-active in reacting to market and business changes. The company leverages the real-time reporting capabilities in Epicor iScala Hospitality to harvest data to view the performance of the properties and to view forecasts and budgets to benchmark against the set measurements.

"The ability to access performance analysis reports and supporting market information to all hotels and business units provides a much more solid base to define strategic goals and business objectives tailored to the individual markets and environments we operate in," said Rainer. "This, in turn, has increased reliability and accuracy of budgeting and forecasting throughout the company."

LeMeridien Hotels

Industry

Hotel

Headquarters

London, England

Employees

30,000 Employees

Epicor solution

Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment

Business Challenge

Major growth in the Portuguese tourist sector required improved efficiency in front and back office systems to improve efficiency to provide better budgeting and forecasting

Solution

Robust solution for accounting management solution with functionality designed for the hospitality industry and support for multiple locations, multiple currencies and full asset management capabilities

Business Benefits

- Modular design provides rapid implementation
- Strong integration with Microsoft Office tools already used within the business
- Highly customizable to allow for future legal, fiscal and policy changes
- Financial departments have access to over 90 percent of the daily business figures needed to make advanced budgeting and forecasting decisions

“I had a clear vision for what we could achieve in terms of financial control and improvements in the organization’s management and Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment has helped us achieve this goal.”

— Carlos Rosales
CEO of Le Meridien Park
Atlantic Portugal

The five-star Le Meridien Park Atlantic Lisboa is situated in the centre of Lisbon with stunning views of Eduardo VII Park and Marquis de Pombal. The hotel is highly regarded by the business community with fourteen elegant meeting and function rooms that can accommodate up to 500 people. The Le Meridien Park Atlantic Hotel Lisboa and its sister hotel The Le Meridien Park Atlantic Hotel Porto in the north of Portugal have both benefited from the country’s economic growth and increased tourism.

At the end of 2002, senior management at Le Meridien Park Atlantic Lisboa decided that a new vision was needed for the back office organization, which would improve financial control and allow for new services to be provided to guests. The new structure would use “cell organizations” within the hotel to organize the staff around similar jobs independent of the workflow from either a revenue or cost perspective. For this plan to work, each cell would need access to better, more timely budgeting, forecasting and operational data.

One of the primary goals was to improve efficiency and switch the reporting cycle from a monthly to daily basis to allow tighter control on costs. Carlos Rosales, the CEO of Le Meridien Park Atlantic Portugal explained, “We can’t manage a seasonal business sensibly with only monthly revenue figures. We also needed to know the costs of the operation on a daily basis, because in the hotel business, tight control of P&L by lines is what makes the difference between overall profit and loss.”

Modifying the hotel’s legacy Fidelio Back Office system to meet the new challenge was not possible, so the hotel approached several systems integrators and software vendors with its list of requirements. The key criteria of flexibility, daily reporting and integration with existing systems were priorities, and after several rounds of meetings and demonstrations it was Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment that was chosen as the most suitable solution.

“We looked at several vendors, but Epicor already had a hospitality solution that was close to our requirements and it also has support for our existing property management software (PMS) and point-of-sale (POS) systems,” said Rodrigo Faria, CFO of Le Meridien Park Atlantic. “Epicor has flexibility to meet our individual needs and PlatinSoft, the local Epicor systems integrators, have a good track record on delivering these types of solutions to the hospitality market.”

The integration project started in January 2003, and to reduce deployment time and management overhead, the main back office software for both hotels was consolidated at a single site with communication links to both hotels. With the help of an implementation team from Epicor and PlatinSoft, the first phase of the project implemented the Epicor Financials Suite. According to Faria, “The first phase of the project went smoothly and we were able to specify, modify and test the new system in less than four months.”

The second phase required PlatinSoft to create special modifications to allow data other than financial to be passed from the old Fidelio PMS and Cost Control Systems directly into the Epicor Business Intelligence modules.

“The flexibility of this solution means that in the future we can upgrade our PMS and POS systems from almost any vendor on the market and still have compatibility with our back office systems,” explained Faria.

With all the testing and training complete, the project was concluded and the benefits to the group were almost immediately apparent. The new intelligent data import from the hotel's old PMS and POS systems combined with the Epicor analysis tools means that the financial departments of both hotels have access to over 90 percent of the daily business figures needed to make advanced budgeting and forecasting decisions. The tools also help avoid double and triple entries, which reduce additional paper work and help the department to deliver reports on time.

Faria added, “An area where the software has really helped us is in calculating and managing the commissions paid to travel agents. The add-on that PlatinSoft created for us allows us to calculate commissions directly from client reservation with the commissions paid automatically, but with full visibility by our internal auditors. This has reduced the amount of paperwork for our accounts departments, and prompt payment is always welcomed by our travel agent partners.”

In the year since the implementation of Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment, both Le Meridien Park Atlantic hotels in Portugal have successfully moved to the new “cell organizations” structure, and the transition is helped by allowing each group access to data from the Epicor Financials Suite, in conjunction with familiar Microsoft® Office tools such as Excel®, Word® and Outlook®.

Le Meridien Park Atlantic Portugal CEO, Carlos Rosales believes they have made a wise investment in Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment. “I had a clear vision for what we could achieve in terms of financial control and improvements in the organization's management and Epicor for Hospitality and Entertainment has helped us achieve this goal,” said Rosales.

“The last year has been one of our most profitable even with world events negatively effecting tourism in our region, and we will continue to look at ways to use information technology to help us improve our operating procedures and the services we can offer to our guests,” Rosales concluded.

EPICOR®

Worldwide Headquarters
18200 Von Karman Avenue Suite 1000
Irvine, CA 92612

Inquiries:

Toll Free: 800-997-7528 (US/Canada)
Phone: 952-417-5207 (International)
E-mail: info@epicor.com
www.epicor.com

For more information visit us on the Web at:
<http://www.epicor.com>