

Case study

Center Parcs



Center Parcs operates 4 Holiday Villages in the UK, each set in a forest environment providing high quality accommodation in fully equipped villas, apartments and holiday lodges. Each village offers an extensive range of sports and leisure facilities plus numerous restaurants, bars and retail outlets.



The Requirement

Having recently created an online booking system for events and activities, Center Parcs were looking for a partner to provide villages with kiosks so that customers could book activities or change existing ones on-site.

In addition, digital signage screens located at key points around the village were required to show footage of activities and demonstrate what was on offer so that visitors could see what they want to do before they book. The signage also displayed a scrolling list of real time availability for all activities to help visitors plan their activities with minimal disruption to their day or need for booking days ahead.

The Business Model

The objective was to increase revenue from on-site activity bookings by

- (a) Improving the visibility and communication of available activities through digital signage
- (b) Providing the facility to change or add bookings using local interactive kiosks. The network is funded by the increased revenue from activity bookings.



The Installation

Digital signs and kiosks are all on the same site network. The digital signs, taking the form of large format, landscape orientated LCDs are placed internally in areas where most holiday makers congregate i.e. Sports bar and bowling alleys. The kiosks are situated near to reception areas so that a Center Parcs colleague is always available to assist if necessary.

Apart from the kiosk hardware and the LCDs, the rest of the solution was provided by Working Solutions.

The digital signs, some of which were new LCD screens and some of which were existing CRT TVs were connected via LAN to small format AOpen PCs running Acquire player software and software Sentinel. The Sentinel locks down the players, preventing

unwanted access. It can also relaunch Acquire or Windows and reboot the player in event of any file or software corruption. It also creates a connection to the Acquire Site Manager software so that remote diagnostics can be performed. The players are able to pull content updates from the PLUS! Network (Acquire's bespoke distribution technology) at regular intervals. They can also have content pushed to them using the Point2Point (FTP) method of deployment if necessary. A Custom Acquire plug-in, called 'DynaScript', was written for Center Parcs to pull a Center Parcs XML feed of activity availability information into a Flash template on the digital signs.

(2) The kiosks run the Acquire player software and the advanced Watchdog version of same software Sentinel mentioned above.



The main difference with Watchdog is that it can be remotely configured using Working Solutions' Kiosk Monitor software to respond to local software or hardware events and triggers e.g. high temperature, hard drive capacity etc. These triggers are monitored by the Working Solutions support team. At the same time email alerts are sent to Working Solutions account managers and key Center Parcs personnel. The interface to Center Parcs' web site booking system is handled by CyberBrowser - a secure internet browser developed by Working Solutions, which is available as a standalone product but in this case runs as a plug-in to the Acquire Player software.

141 guests interviewed

Kiosks

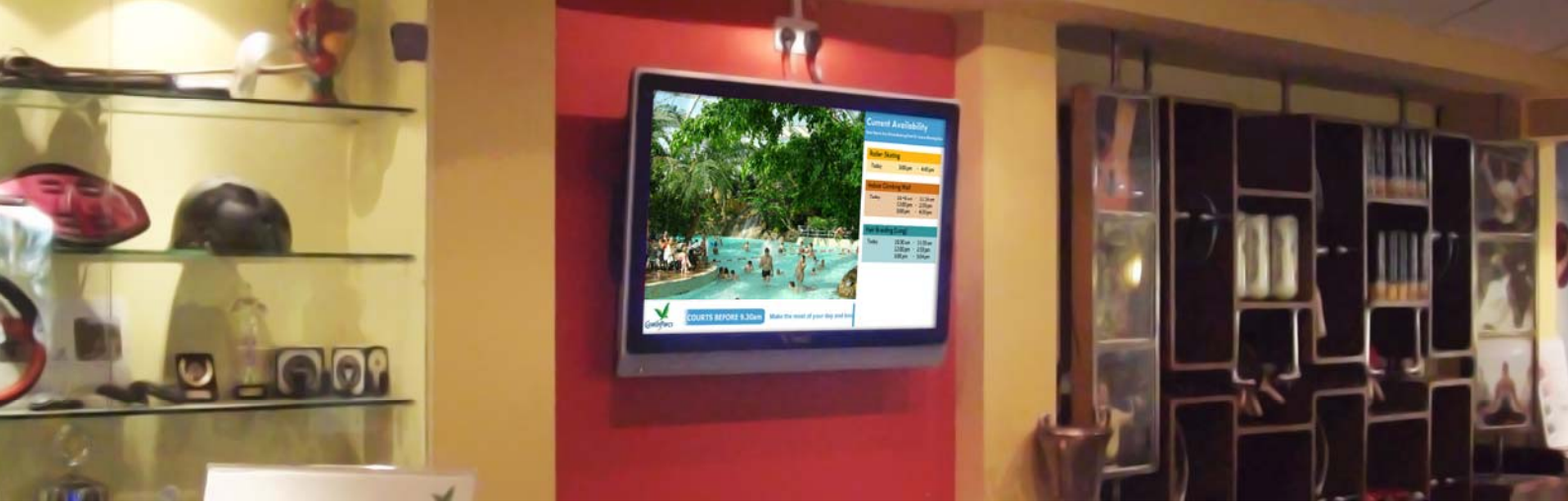
78% of guests interviewed said they had noticed the kiosks.

60% went on to make a booking using the kiosks.

Digital Signage

54% of guests interviewed said they had noticed the digital signage.

11% went on to make a booking after noticing the digital signage.



The Content

Digital signage screens located at key points around the village are being used to show footage of activities and demonstrate what is on offer so that visitors can see what they want to do before they book. The signage also displays a scrolling list of real time availability for all activities to help visitors plan their activities with minimal disruption to their day or need for booking days ahead.

Scale

The current installations, with more planned are - Sherwood Forest with 5 digital players, connected to multiple screens, connecting to an Acquire media server. And, an additional 10 booking kiosks. Elveden Forest with 10 players connected to multiple screens. Longleat Forest currently has 10 booking point kiosks. Whinfell Forest currently has 10 players connected to digital signs.



Proof of Concept

In September 2008, Center Parcs enlisted the help of an external marketing company to measure the effectiveness of both the digital signage screens and the kiosks at their Sherwood holiday village.

Many guests suggested having more screens showing activities & events, a good indication that they are not intrusive

The screens and booking kiosks are a useful addition to the improved booking provision which allows those who can't or won't pre-book or guests who have additional time to fill to get the information they need (and even go on and book).

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