



# ALOFT® NEW ORLEANS ACHIEVES EXCELLENCE IN GUEST EXPERIENCE

MOTOTRBO™ RADIOS AND THE STARGUEST APP STREAMLINE WORKFLOW



Aloft New Orleans Downtown makes hospitality look effortless in the Big Easy. With 31 stories and 188 rooms, it's situated in the heart of the Central Business District, just steps from the famed French Quarter and Superdome. This stylish boutique hotel offers a vibrant social scene, tech-driven amenities and generous meeting space.

Aloft operates in a dynamic tourist district with many options for upscale lodging. "We are in a very competitive market and it is important to have the right communication device to help us compete and provide exceptional service," says Kristi Taglauer, General Manager of Aloft New Orleans Downtown.

A boutique subsidiary of Starwood Hotel and Resorts Worldwide, Aloft caters to the millennial traveler and strives to stay ahead of hospitality trends. Its parent, Starwood, was the first to provide keyless entry through a mobile phone app for frequent guests, and this innovative drive extends to Aloft.

As Aloft prepared to open in downtown New Orleans, their management looked to another technology leader to implement the right communication system to meet their unique requirements. Motorola's MOTOTRBO digital radios were the perfect solution with crystal-clear voice calling and integrated data capabilities customized for the StarGuest work order ticket system.

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

### Company

- Aloft Downtown
- New Orleans, Louisiana

### Motorola Solution

- MOTOTRBO SL 7550 Portable Radios
- MOTOTRBO XPR™ 7550 Portable Radios
- Motorola Swivel Earpieces
- Motorola 2-Wire Black Earpieces
- Customized StarGuest Application
- STS-MG1 Streektrek Solutions Middleware
- MOTOTRBO XPR 8400 Repeater

### Features

- Real-time exchange of information
- Clear communication in very loud environments
- Accurate reporting, faster guest responsiveness
- Greater efficiency of daily operations

## CASE STUDY

ALOFT NEW ORLEANS DOWNTOWN

### THE CHALLENGE

#### Find the Right Device for Diverse Staff Needs

Aloft was slated to enter the downtown New Orleans market in a former office building near the Central Business District in early 2015. The management team was seeking a real-time communication system that would operate clearly throughout the renovation process – particularly over the intense sounds of construction – and continue as the main modality after the hotel opened.

Management also wanted a multipurpose device that would integrate seamlessly with Starwood’s proprietary StarGuest application. The Aloft team knew they had to hit the ground running and stay on their toes to create a memorable first experience for guests.

#### Access the StarGuest App Easily and Efficiently

The StarGuest application enables hotels to transmit information via a data message to a device which the user confirms by text entry. Whether it’s a request for fresh towels by the pool or a repair to an air conditioner in a room, StarGuest is the pathway for efficient workflow and improved staff collaboration.

“As a new Starwood brand we’ve had to modify StarGuest for Aloft Hotels. We are smaller than our sister properties which typically have 300 rooms and more. There has not

been a lot of work done with StarGuest in our smaller boutique hotels,” says Kristi Taglauer, General Manager of Aloft New Orleans Downtown.

“If we didn’t have the StarGuest app, our staff would have to rely on voice communications. They would have to call another staff member, who would write it down, and then the front desk would record the response on a piece of paper. That is very 1985,” Taglauer points out, “and doesn’t reflect our brand personality.”

#### Eliminate the Cost and Inconvenience of Multiple Devices

For Aloft to deploy the StarGuest app they would either have to use a second device, such as a consumer-grade tablet or notebook, or find a device that handled both voice and data capabilities and was purpose-built for business use.

“Carrying two devices was a cumbersome and very inefficient way for staff to work,” says General Manager Kristi Taglauer. “It’s extremely cost prohibitive because you’re talking about two major mobile devices that you pay for, carry insurance on, and service or repair. Devices get lost and having two doesn’t sync very well – you’re looking at one while someone is calling you on another.”

**“We had great reception right off the bat with MOTOTRBO digital radios, and that was a huge time and money saver.”**

**Kristi Taglauer,  
General Manager,  
Aloft New Orleans  
Downtown**



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**“Having voice and data on the MOTOTRBO radio is a great solution. It cuts down having to carry two devices and the cost of upkeep for two.”**

**Mark Abadie, Chief Engineer, Aloft New Orleans Downtown**

### THE SOLUTION

#### **MOTOTRBO Unifies Communications from the Ground Up**

Wendi Weileman, Account Executive at Tomba Communications, the local Motorola channel partner, presented an ideal solution to meet Aloft’s diverse requirements: MOTOTRBO digital two-way radios. MOTOTRBO radios combine crystal-clear voice, real-time data and seamless coverage – along with rugged durability and long battery life – imperative for a 24-hour operation.

Throughout the renovation process, the staff at Aloft used MOTOTRBO XPR 7550 and SL 7550 digital portable radios operating on a single site conventional system. The clarity of voice communications was excellent despite the thick concrete walls, towering floors and constant barrage of heavy equipment and noise, according to Kristi Taglauer.

“During construction, which can be very chaotic, it was wonderful to use the MOTOTRBO digital radios anywhere in our 31-story building and not have issues with interference. We had great reception right off the bat and that was a huge time and money saver,” she says.

#### **MOTOTRBO and StarGuest App Work Together Seamlessly**

“We weren’t using the radios as multipurpose during construction,” says Mark Abadie, Chief Engineer at Aloft New Orleans Downtown. “We were strictly using them for voice. We knew we wanted to utilize the data capabilities of MOTOTRBO radios, especially for StarGuest for housekeeping and engineering.”

As the hotel build-out was progressing, Wendi Weileman of Tomba Communications brought together executives from Aloft, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, along with Comtran Associates, a Motorola middleware partner, to link the StarGuest app to MOTOTRBO digital radios.

The successful result was not only a tech first for Aloft, but the StarGuest team was impressed by the way their technology could work with MOTOTRBO radios. “This was an eye-opener for them because they were used to people having two devices,” says Kristi Taglauer.

Each day at Aloft, work order tickets are sent from the front desk computer directly to a MOTOTRBO radio. “Once we receive the data on our radios, we acknowledge it by pressing 1,” explains Mark Abadie. “When the task is complete, we ping the front desk to call the guest and clarify the work has been done. Then the ticket is closed. It’s also a way for us to create and track future jobs, such as shampooing the carpet on an entire floor.”

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### THE BENEFITS

#### Improved Accuracy for Reporting and Forecasting

Now when the front desk enters a ticket, all of the statuses are reported: who changed the status, when it was changed, and when it was completed. "The reporting is really tight," says Kristi Taglauer. "For instance, we discovered that two towels in each bathroom were not enough. Every day we saw additional towel requests, so we upped the number based on that report and cut our calls to almost nothing. We can look at trends in the system, too. If we repeatedly get the same call for the same room for an air conditioner, we know there's a bigger issue."

#### Clear, Discreet Conversation in Loud Environments

"Our open air lobby is absolutely busy and the front desk is 10 feet inside our front door," says Taglauer. "We have music every day, including live bands that are directly across from the front desk. It can be pretty tough to handle phone calls, but we don't have any issues with MOTOTRBO radios. We can hear very clearly. Every single person in our hotel is on a Motorola discreet headset. It is critical to have that noise-canceling capability for our guest experience."

#### Exceptional Efficiency from Opening Day On

From the ultra-thin and light SL 7550 portables used by front desk staff and management to the rugged XPR 7550s in engineering, housekeeping and valet services, Aloft relies on MOTOTRBO radios to streamline workflow and accelerate responsiveness to guests. "Our staff likes it because they don't have paperwork. They see the work order on their radio and since everyone is mobile, they can complete the call quickly," says Mark Abadie.

"MOTOTRBO radios have really improved the efficiency of our staff operations and allowed us to condense our reporting so we're not gathering information from different sources," adds Kristi Taglauer. "In our business, any time we can exceed a guest's expectations is huge. If



someone asks for towels at the front desk, we send that request to a MOTOTRBO radio and before they get to their room, the towels are on the bed."

#### The Right Communications Elevate Guest Service

Like their competitors in this major tourist hub, success at Aloft is measured in terms of guest satisfaction. Staff must excel and MOTOTRBO digital radios have given them the ability to do that – both with excellent voice communications and real-time data. "Our guest experience index or GEI has improved from 6.3 in the beginning to 8.76 out of 10," says Kristi Taglauer, General Manager. "Those results have put us in the top ten in the entire company in the short time we've been open."

"It's a great feeling to walk into Aloft now and see all of the staff operating seamlessly, effectively and discreetly. Building a communication solution with multiple capabilities is fundamental for the hospitality business, and MOTOTRBO was the answer," says Wendi Weileman.

**"Motorola is such a strong brand, we knew we were going down the right road. The performance of the MOTOTRBO radios has been stellar."**

**Kristi Taglauer, General Manager, Aloft New Orleans Downtown**



For more information on how to achieve excellence in guest experience, visit [motorolasolutions.com/hospitality](http://motorolasolutions.com/hospitality) or contact your local Motorola representative.

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