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# Valet System a Hit at JAX Off Airport Operation

BY MELISSA BEAN STERZICK

**A**IRPORTS ARE UNIQUE AND challenging environments with heavy traffic, intense security requirements, complicated scheduling factors and thousands of customers under high pressure.

Officials at King Off Airport Parking in Jacksonville, FL, had some specific factors to consider when they chose a valet operating system for their recent upgrade. Geography, finances, customer service and technology were just a few of the issues the company hoped to address.

Besides all the expected functions of valet service, King Airport Parking's valet staff also must accommodate the challenges inherent to air travel.

King selected Automated Valet to provide its valet technology and installed AVPM Mobile early this year. The system's revenue control features cover every aspect of the operation from ticket inventory to employees' schedules.

Alex Sivar, King's President and CEO, said his company chose the system because of its user-friendly features and ability to reduce processing time. Since the installation, Sivar has seen positive changes at his facility.

"A great deal of payroll hours have been saved, and our total revenue and customer satisfaction have increased considerably over last year," Sivar said.

In addition, valet management can oversee the site from anywhere in the world over the Internet. Supervisors can prepare reports, complete payroll, and monitor employees and revenue from their offices miles away from the site. They also can read

real-time reports from the valet facility's operation board.

The operation board is designed to track every transaction at the facility, including employee entry and exit, receiving and delivery of cars, and, most important, the security and tracking of customers' keys. Each vehicle and its keys are monitored from the moment they enter the valet system.

Misplaced keys are reported, through audio and visual signals, to onsite and offsite staff if they are not delivered to the dispatch area within 12 minutes of receipt. Lost keys had been a major cause of customer dissatisfaction, and the operation board technology is a successful preventive measure.

King Airport Parking staff use an offsite server, located at Automated Valet's headquarters, to manage the operation. This mobile connection frees up space, eases maintenance and simplifies geographical logistics at the airport's receiving and delivery areas, but still allows the staff to process reservations, cars, keys, bills, and other work on-site.

They use a POS system to initiate remote access and handheld devices to scan customer information, including vehicle identification number (VIN) decoding and recognition, automated recording of previous damages, reservation details, flight information, service fees such as car wash and detail, tip amounts and more.

To speed the reservations and check-in processes and help customers arrive on time for flights, there is an online reservation page connected to King's main database.

Credit card and flight information are recorded and available when the customer arrives. At check-in, each online customer presents the valet with a customized "Parking boarding pass" with complete information about their flight and services requested, and the valet is able to insert this information by scan-

ning barcodes on valet boarding passes with the handheld units.

The operating system has streamlined the application of King Airport Valet's extensive rate table. By automating all data-gathering at the site, including reservations, coupons, validations, preferred customer discounts and other entries, the new system has boosted revenue control and decreased processing time. "Barcode scanning and repeat-customer recognition features helped us to enhance our revenue," Sivar said. "As an off-airport parking facility, the check-in process is very important for us."

In the often chaotic experience of the air traveler, transfer from air to land and into a waiting vehicle can be another step in an overwhelming process. The system is equipped to take customers' requests for vehicles through e-mail or text, making delivery fast and convenient.

Customers inconvenienced by long lines and heavy baggage are spared the hassle of searching the airport for a valet kiosk or waiting by the curb for indefinite amounts of time. The airport benefits from the decrease in space occupied by bulky interface equipment.

"Customers can request their cars with e-mail or text as soon as they land. This makes the delivery of their car faster, because the valet can deliver the car by the time the customer gets off the plane and picks up their luggage," said Ken Gulec, Automated Valet's CEO.

All of the technology applied at King Airport Parking's valet facility serves to accommodate the customer and support the success of the entire operation. The use of the Internet and wireless technology is crucial to the needs of a valet facility serving air travelers.

Customers benefit from the online interface and the



Attendant Scans a vehicle's VIN number at King Airport Parking.

simplicity of the technology used to process their reservations and vehicles. The company is able to realize high standards for customer service through straightforward and accurate procedures and control its revenue at the same time.

"This location is very unique because the technology used (here) is used nowhere else in the world in the parking industry," Gulec said.

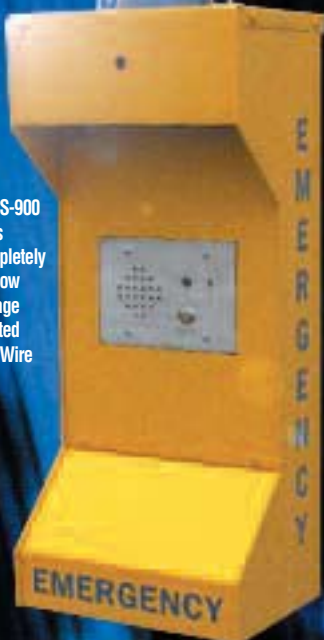
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