



## Leading UK Hotel Company Streamlines Operations with Visual One Solution Suite

Four Pillars Hotels is one of the UK's top independent hotel companies, offering three- and four-star luxury accommodations to business and leisure travelers alike. The company owns and manages six hotels in Bristol, the Cotswolds, Oxford and Thames Valley, with more planned over the next few years.

Guests at Four Pillars properties enjoy a number of amenities, including fine-dining restaurants, state-of-the-art conference facilities, luxury spas and fitness centers. Located in some of England's most scenic areas, the hotels are popular venues for both business and social events and are well-known for impeccable service and attention to detail. The occupancy rate across the group, which includes approximately 800 rooms, averages 70 percent.

With business so brisk, Four Pillars recognised the need for a centralised property management system that would increase efficiency and enhance guest service. The company also wanted a comprehensive point-of-sale solution and a system that would automate accounting, reservations, sales and catering and spa management, ensuring standardised operations and continuity across all of its properties.

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> **Industry:** Hospitality

> **Challenge:** Multi-property hotel company needed a centralised property management system that was flexible and reliable

> **Solution:** The Visual One Premier Property Management System from Agilysys

> **Results:** Increased efficiency and streamlined guest service at six properties



- The sales and catering system enables the company to keep track of sales calls, bookings, banquet orders and production reports at each hotel.

#### **Improved performance, greater control**

Key members of the company's operations staff looked at several systems and selected the Visual One Premiere System from Agilysys, a flexible and reliable property management solution that offers a wide range of features and functionality, including front office operations, guest history, housekeeping and reservations management. Operating with a Microsoft SQL® Server database, the solution uses familiar Microsoft products to build mailing lists, create charts and graphs and send reservation confirmations to hotel guests.

Four Pillars also selected the Visual One Point-of-Sale System, a made-for-hospitality POS solution that is both touch-screen and barcode controlled. It is used in the restaurants, lounges, spas and pubs at the six properties. The Visual One Spa Management System is used at two of the hotels to keep track of employee work schedules and commission levels, as well as send e-mail confirmations to guests who have booked spa appointments.

To manage its busy banquet and meeting room operations, Four Pillars implemented the Visual One Sales & Catering System. The solution is especially powerful when used in conjunction with the Visual One property management system, because the two solutions are fully integrated and provide real-time information exchanges between front office and sales and catering offices. Dozens of special events are held at Four Pillars properties each month — from weddings and anniversary parties to corporate retreats and business meetings. The sales and catering system enables the company to keep track of sales calls, bookings, banquet orders and production reports at each hotel.

According to Four Pillars Hotels Group Revenue Manager Hayley Oliver, the company selected the Visual One suite from Agilysys because of its powerful yet scalable components that improve productivity in nearly every area of operations. "We wanted a solution that was tightly integrated, utilising the same database

and providing real-time information exchanges. Using the same system at all of our hotels gives us greater control over our business and maximises performance.”

Four Pillars executives also valued the reputation of Agilysys in the hospitality market. “The company offers solutions that have been successfully implemented in properties around the world,” said Oliver. “Agilysys is also known for excellent service and support.”

### Smooth transition and training

Four Pillars installed the Visual One solutions in stages, from February 2006 through June 2008. Initial training went smoothly over a four-week period, with staff members trained on-site, before installation. Training sessions were divided into specialty areas, such as point-of-sale, sales & catering and spa, making it easier for staff to learn. “Employees caught on quickly. The system is intuitive and user-friendly,” said Oliver.

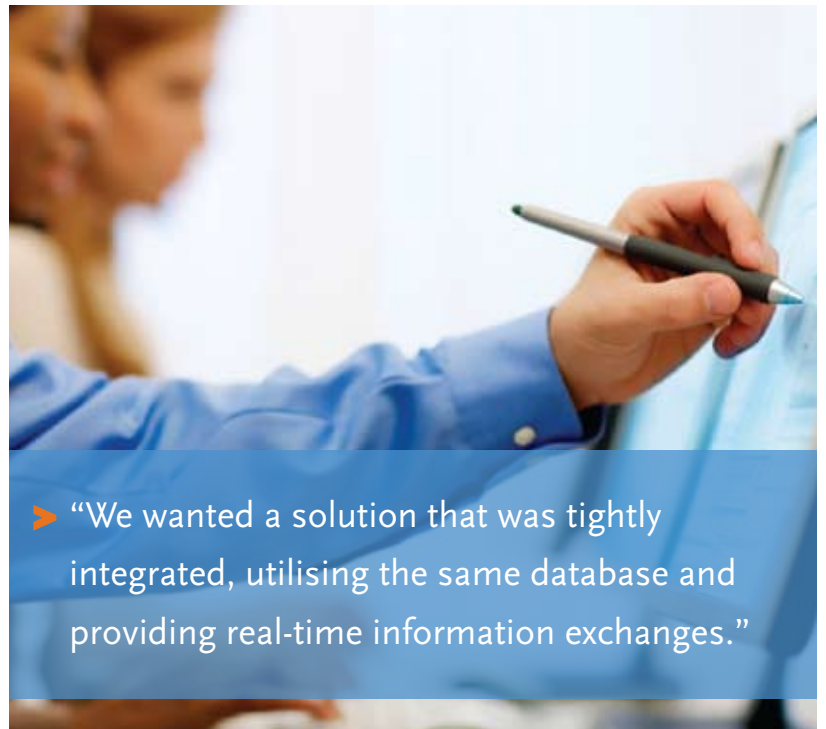
Prior to implementing the Visual One solution, Four Pillars Hotels had used another software suite, which, according to Oliver, was limited in scope and performance. “It didn’t integrate with our point-of-sale solution and didn’t meet the needs of our growing company. We wanted a comprehensive and ‘one-stop shop’ solution that offered more features, tight integration and total reliability.”

With the Visual One solution, all six hotels are on a single system that handles property management, point-of-sale, sales & catering and spa management. Guest information and company information are shared on a centralised database, and central reservations can log into all hotels. The modules are fully integrated, which ensures smooth operations and enhanced guest service.

Benefits begin when guests call to make a reservation. Now they can book a room, spa appointment and dinner reservation all at once, without having to be passed from the front desk to the spa to the restaurant. Reservations staff

takes care of everything quickly and efficiently, which results in an enhanced guest experience.

Moreover, when guests book online, the revenue stays with the hotel. Four Pillars previously used a third-party reservations service and paid a fee for every completed transaction. “Since implementing the Visual One system, we’ve substantially reduced the cost of our web bookings, because Agilysys doesn’t charge a per-transaction fee,” Oliver said.



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Another benefit is the system’s financial reporting capabilities. “Our accounts receivable and daily sales reports are much more complete,” Oliver said. Managers can make more informed business decisions, because they have an accurate financial picture.

The Visual One solution also provides comprehensive yield management reporting. “Our information is regularly updated, so we see booking patterns and trends,” she said. As a result, the company can take a systematic approach to increasing profitability and develop pricing and inventory controls based on guest purchasing behavior.



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Still another advantage is centralised data management. Although Four Pillars previously had computerized its records, they were not updated in real-time. As a result, information was often inaccurate. Now, the Visual One system ensures that data from each department is correct and up-to-the-minute, which results in more efficient operations.

The Visual One solution even assists in marketing. Four Pillars recently began issuing guests ‘Privilege Club’ cards, which are generated through the Visual One point-of-sale system. Each time a guest visits one of the company’s hotels or restaurants, the card is swiped and the information recorded. “We can see which hotels guests are visiting and view their average spend,” says Oliver. The company then targets promotions to guests based on that information.

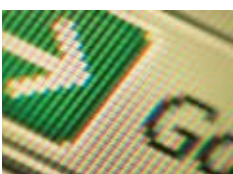
### Expansion planned

Four Pillars Hotels is so pleased with the Visual One solution suite that it plans to expand its use. Within a year, the company likely will implement the Visual One condo accounting module to manage its apartments at Cotswold Water Park.

In the meantime, its six hotels are enjoying increased efficiency and seamless guest service from arrival through departure. “At Four Pillars properties, it’s all about providing an outstanding guest experience,” concluded Oliver. “With the Visual One solution suite from Agilysys, we can do that with ease.”

### Who We Are and What We Do

Agilysys, Inc. is a leading provider of innovative information technology (IT) solutions serving corporate and public-sector customers, with special expertise in select markets, including retail and hospitality. We provide technology solutions – including hardware, software and services – to help customers resolve their most complicated IT needs. Our expertise includes enterprise architecture and high availability, infrastructure optimization, storage and resource management, identity management, and business continuity; along with software and services designed specifically for the retail and hospitality markets. We operate from locations throughout North America, and in the United Kingdom and China, with headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio.



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