



The best-selling TM-T88 series just got even better.




CONTACT US | SUBSCRIBE | NEWSLETTER |  RSS FEEDS

 -

Welcome, Guest | [Sign In](#) | [Register](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Top Stories](#)
- [Case Studies](#)
- [News](#)
- [Reports](#)
- [Tech Innovations](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Buyers' Guide](#)
- [White Papers](#)
- [Magazine](#)
- [Opinions](#)

-  [Add to My Favorites](#)
- [Print](#)
- [Email Page](#)
- [ShareThis](#)
- [RSS Feeds](#)
-  [Newsletter](#)

Most Read Stories

- [Breach Report: Who Got Hacked in 2010?](#)
- [2011 Lodging Technology Study](#)
- [Marriott Pulls Plug on Adult Movies](#)
- [POS Software 2011](#)
- [Handheld POS Serves 1,300 Guests Per Hour at Dinner & Movie Concept Chain](#)

Posted On: 1/4/2011

Hotel Retrofitting: How to Avoid Falling into a Money Pit

By Eric Rahe, Principal, BLT Architects; Bob Voth, Executive Vice President, PHY Engineers Inc

In many urban environments today, the cost of building new hotels is driving developers to instead look at repurposing existing structures. While affordable and environmentally-friendly, adaptive reuse of old buildings has its own challenges. Luckily, technology can significantly reduce the risk, time, and construction cost of putting a new hotel in an old structure. When used properly, technology can address some of the biggest barriers to redevelopment and ultimately produce a greater return on the developer's and operator's investments. There are three big problems with redeveloping old buildings into hotels: knowing what is currently in the building, incorporating systems in small spaces, and creating a modern experience for the guest.

Challenge #1: What's Behind the Walls?

Many times, the buildings most well-suited for reuse as hotels are former offices or apartments. They are typically pretty old and were designed and constructed before modern best practices were established. In some cases, they have already been renovated at least once by a different team of architects for a different purpose. All this can mean that there are expensive surprises and challenges around every corner and behind every wall.



Utilizing 3-D laser imaging technology can help identify and address potential problems before the design process even begins. The device is small-ish and round, and can be placed in any space. It records and measures every detail of a room or hallway digitally. Then, an architect can open the file it creates and design within the context of the building as it actually exists, not as they think it does. This significantly streamlines the design process and limits the costly revisions made during construction.

Challenge #2: Sneaking in Systems

Old buildings tend to have small systems. The space allocated to them is therefore also small. This can be a big challenge for hotel re-use, as there are HVAC, water, and exhaust requirements that must be met. In the cases of limited space for systems, new chilled beam technology can be very effective.

Traditional chilled water systems blow chilled air from the cooling water source through duct work into rooms. Chilled beams work differently in that they do not need duct work. Instead, they move the chilled water directly to the rooms. The basic properties of water mean it can carry more energy (i.e. cooling) than air per unit volume, thereby requiring less space. One central pumping system moves the water, meaning it is also environmentally-friendly and can earn a building four to 14 LEED points. This can be a significant advantage for hotel operators and speed the construction process.

Challenge #3: Pleasing People

Hotel guests these days expect sophisticated, high-tech systems in their rooms. New hotels in old buildings are no exception. Unfortunately, many of these buildings were not designed to have each room fully wired for modern technology. A consolidation panel can help solve that problem. All the low-voltage systems in guestrooms, including the telephone, television, and drapes, can be wired from a single location, making installation much easier.

Lighting is often the biggest challenge when it comes to wiring. To limit the amount of conduit and wiring needed in a room, a wireless radio frequency (RF) system can be put in place. It controls the lighting through RF technology and can be integrated into the consolidation panel. This helps hotel operators provide cutting-edge technology in rooms not initially designed to have it.

By utilizing technology to strategically address costly challenges, buildings can be effectively and economically re-used as competitive boutique and luxury hotels that please both guests and operators.

Eric Rahe is a principal at BLT Architects responsible for the hospitality and gaming practice. He led the design of the redevelopment of the Reading Terminal Headhouse in Philadelphia for Marriott, among many other projects.



MURTEC
2011 MULTI-UNIT RESTAURANT TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

**THE INTEGRATED ENTERPRISE:
Aligning Technology Initiatives with Business Objectives**

MARCH 16-18, 2011 • CAESAR'S PALACE, LAS VEGAS

White Papers



Web-Based Dining Reservations Do It All
11/29/2010
Treasure Island Hotel & Casino turned to ReServe Interactive for streamlined reservations across three restaurants, allowing customers to easily check availability and make reservations online.
[Download Now](#)

[More White Papers...](#)

Reports



2011 Lodging Technology Study
1/7/2011
In this landmark nation-wide study, *Hospitality Technology* polled more than 114 lodging executives to gain a clearer view of the trends that are occurring during this critical time. Learn how operators rank in-room technologies, PMS features and much more.
[Download Now](#)

[More Reports...](#)

Web Events

Successful Hotels in 2020: Five Must-Have Characteristics
12/16/2010 11:00:00 AM
Moderator:
>> Abby Lorden, Editor-in-Chief, *Hospitality Technology*

Panelists:
>> John Bollen, VP of IT Strategy and Business

Robert Voth, executive vice president at PHY Engineers Inc., has extensive experience in the adaptive re-use of structures in the hospitality market. Projects include the PSFS Loews, the Aria, and the Reading Terminal Headhouse.

RELATED ARTICLES

**HDTV Insights: Are You Wasting Money & Losing Guests with Your HDTV?
Can You Hear Me Now? Nope.**

Engagement, **MGM Mirage/CityCenter**
>>Rohit Talwar, CEO, **Fast Future Research**
>>Stephen Puente, Manager of Business
Development, **Amadeus Americas**
View On Demand

[More Web Events...](#)



1 2 3 4 5

OK

Current rating: 4.6 (5 ratings)

[MEDIA KIT](#) | [EDITORIAL CALENDAR](#) | [PRIVACY STATEMENT](#) | [TERMS & CONDITIONS](#) | [CONTACT US](#)
All materials on this site Copyright 2010 Edgell Communications. All rights reserved.

