



SUCCESS STORY

For The Star Entertainment Group, it's game on

APIs link front-end channels with
back-end systems for happier customers
and a winning revenue boost

THE  STAR
ENTERTAINMENT GROUP



THE STAR

ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Headquarters

Sydney, Australia

Industry

Entertainment

Challenges

To generate revenue and enhance the customer experience across 3 properties, establish an API layer that connects new customer-facing digital channels with back-end systems

Solution

- AMPLIFY™ API Management

Results

- Increased revenue from new websites, mobile app and kiosks enabled by the API layer
- Enhanced customer experience through the display of real-time content across all digital channels
- Faster time to market with reusable APIs that allow content created on one channel to be reused on another
- Process optimization for business and development, where content is written once and displayed everywhere

APIs link front-end channels with back-end systems for happier customers and a winning revenue boost

When a major tourism and entertainment company rebranded itself to draw more people to its popular destinations, it meant going digital all around. By choosing API solutions from Axway, they avoided gambling on their future.

Australia-based The Star Entertainment Group owns and operates The Star Sydney, Treasury Casino & Hotel and Jupiters Hotel & Casino. As part of an extensive brand refresh, the company needed to connect new customer-facing digital channels – websites, loyalty programs, information kiosks, and mobile app – to existing enterprise systems.

With Axway as a partner in their digital transformation, The Star Entertainment Group was able to seamlessly link its back-end systems to support its new digital market presence, using APIs to create cohesive, captivating experiences for its customers.

In a short time, the company improved service delivery to customers and members, created a smoother content updating process for the staff and increased overall revenue. Syncing existing systems with new digital capabilities has paid off, and then some.

Attracting customers efficiently



To dial-up the appeal of their diverse properties, The Star Entertainment Group (formerly known as Echo Entertainment Group) knew they needed an API layer that could serve all the new digital channels and connect with third-party partners to create compelling content mashups for customers and members. The company also wanted to publish content without requiring assistance from the IT department.

The new API layer needed to power several key business processes, including:

- Hotel room bookings for the company's five hotels
- Restaurant bookings for all of the company's properties
- Loyalty program that tracks member points, offers and promotions
- Websites for each property, including "What's On at the Star"

Two deciding factors: Axway value and local support

For the ambitious system development plan, The Star Entertainment Group needed a reliable and powerful API solution. "We reviewed the providers out there and found most were far too costly," said Laurent Fresnel, Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of The Star Entertainment Group. "Axway's solution gave us quality, but also value for our money."

Axway's solution roadmap was also an important consideration for the company. "We wanted to make sure we had a partner that would follow us and deliver new functionalities as we needed them," said Fresnel.

Another decided advantage was Axway's technical support at the local level. "In Australia, it's a major challenge to find people with the requisite skill sets," said Fresnel. "So, even if price and quality of other solutions had been equivalent, I would still have selected Axway because of its commitment to Australia and its technical people on the ground here."

Design of the Axway solution began in parallel with the development and deployment of new front and back ends systems in late 2014. By November 2015, the first API went live delivering content from a modernized CMS to the new website.

"Throughout, Axway was at our side to help and guide and train us," said Fresnel. "Over time, Axway transitioned from an operational role to a consultant, and now is doing knowledge transfer. We've taken ownership of the solution."

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For us, the API layer is an enabler to generate revenue."**

Jumps in hotel bookings and market share

The Star Entertainment Group has put more than 25 APIs into production since the launch of the Axway solution. A top priority from the onset was to boost company share of the hotel reservation market using their new API-enabled websites and mobile app. That positive result came quickly.

Hotel aggregators once controlled the lions' share of hotel bookings for The Star Entertainment properties. "Our ongoing challenge is to balance room bookings to our own channels while also leveraging the power of other hotel room aggregators. Clearly our profitability improves where we incur lower commissions and secure bookings via our own channels. Our business case showed that if we increased our direct bookings by 10%, we'd have an ROI on the Axway solution in less than six months."

It paid off quicker than predicted. "We had a full ROI in four months," said Fresnel. "For us, the API layer is an enabler to generate revenue. We designed our new websites to be responsive and we noticed that 33% of bookings were handled entirely on a mobile device."

New sources of revenue realized

With the rollout of each new API, The Star Entertainment Group has extended its customer reach to capture new sources of revenue. "Our business strategy is to use digital channels to let customers know what's happening and increase the appeal of our properties," said Fresnel.

Today, Axway APIs are the backbone of several key customer programs, including:

- **Loyalty program.** "Our loyalty program is critical for the success of our business," said Fresnel. "It's key for customer retention." Casino members can swipe their loyalty cards at API-enabled iPad-based kiosks on the gaming floor to check their points and get the latest news and promotions. They can also log on to the mobile app or website to see a compilation of that information including loyalty balance and offers coming from the CMS.
- **Sports bar VIP package.** Each casino features a large sports bar with giant screens for viewing events. To pull in more customers, the company's Sidney property created a VIP package that encourages customers to book their table in advance. "We saw that 80% of those VIP bookings were made from mobile phones," said Fresnel. "So the responsive websites and the API layer are generating revenue we didn't capture before."



Increased revenue and faster time to market with Axway

The Star Entertainment Group has seen a host of benefits with the launch of the new APIs:

- **Increased revenue.** “The Axway API solution is an incremental revenue generator for us,” said Fresnel. “It displays real-time content across all our channels, and that’s what enables customers to engage with us any time.”
- **Enhanced customer experience.** Mobile app feedback for hotel room bookings is very positive.
- **Faster time to market.** Reusable APIs are the difference maker. “Whatever we create on one channel is reusable on another,” said Fresnel. “Also, we can reuse APIs to filter information, restricting and encrypting data that’s sent to third parties.”
- **Process optimization.** The content creation process features self-service publishing, with content written once and displayed everywhere. To speed development, mock-up APIs can be created so new websites and native mobile apps can be developed in parallel by developers in India, the US and Italy.

An ambitious roadmap for the future

New API-powered program roll outs include:

- In-room entertainment system with restaurant information, order-taking and member promotions
- Employee mobile app allows management to communicate with the 70% of staff who do shift work
- Pure-play digital products

“Axway API Management is mission-critical for The Star Entertainment Group. The API layer enables our digital channels, which are increasingly important to our business,” Fresnel said.

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