

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Bicester Hotel, Golf & Spa

LOCATION

Bicester, Oxfordshire

BUSINESS TYPE

Resort hotel & events venue with restaurants, spa, golf, health and fitness facilities for members



Alacer is first resort for Bicester Hotel, Golf & Spa

Bicester Hotel Golf and Spa is a family-owned resort set among acres of beautiful Oxfordshire countryside. With 52 spacious rooms and suites, six well-appointed function suites, lakeside restaurant, casual dining restaurant, and sports bar. The resort also offers a 9-hole golf course, state of the art driving range and golf shop, full-service health club with extensive gym facilities, 200-metre open water swimming lake, assault course, tennis courts, 20-metre indoor pool and 8 spa treatment rooms. The resort is the perfect location for both business & leisure, with direct train links to both Oxford, London and nearby attractions like Bicester Village retail park and Silverstone race circuit.

THE CHALLENGE OF DISPARATE SYSTEMS

Prior to switching to Alacer in 2015, the hotel was operating using a variety of disparate systems provided by well established, large, corporate software vendors. Despite investing heavily in these solutions at the outset, the business found that ongoing costs were eye-watering, problems and frustrations were numerous and frequent, internal processes were inefficient and prone to errors where integration failed or was lacking completely. Account management and technical support provision was anonymous and inadequate, coming to a head with a 3-week system outage waiting for a response following a critical system failure.

BRINGING CORE SYSTEMS UNDER ONE ROOF

Roger McPherson, Financial Controller for Bicester, has worked in resort hotels for decades and had seen the issues Bicester were having all too often. Determined to find a real solution to the underlying issues, Roger reached out to the Alacer team and instantly recognised that the suite of functionality Alacer provided was the real answer to the challenge. By having all core systems in a single unified solution, he could see that the Alacer suite ticked all the boxes operationally, while the simple commercial model and absence of large up front software costs, commissions and other hidden costs made the business case for switching easy.

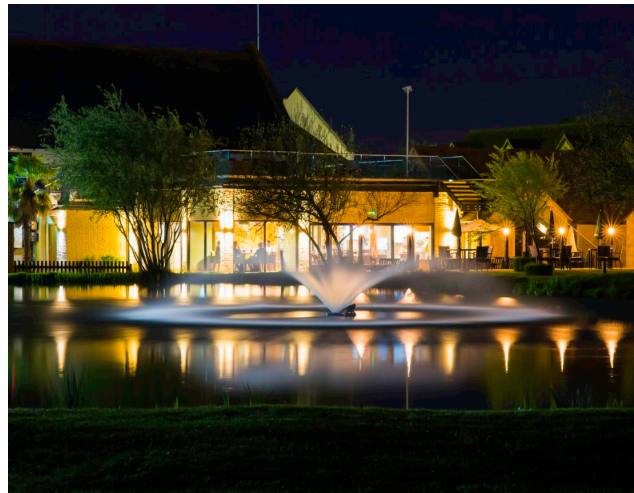
In his own words "Aside from the direct costs of our previous systems, the amount of work they generated in terms of reconciling them, papering over the cracks and trying to provide a seamless guest experience was hampering all operations, Alacer has been the antidote".

“With Alacer we’ve been able to connect departments, streamline processes and analyse the business with ease, putting focus on the guest and not the systems”

ROGER McPHERSON, FINANCIAL CONTROLLER

“ I would thoroughly recommend the Alacer system, particularly for a business with a wide range of operations like ours. The comprehensive and seamless functionality, removal of troublesome interfaces, single monthly fee and inclusive customer support makes switching an easy decision ”

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BETTER SERVICE FOR THE HOTEL AND GUESTS

Reflecting on his experience of using other software packages, Roger commented “Other system providers talk about ‘integrations’ and ‘partnerships’ but the reality in my experience has always been challenging even when it’s actually the same company providing multiple elements that ‘integrate’, let alone when it isn’t. Then there are areas where the integration just doesn’t exist or the landscape changes after the fact and previous links are no longer supported, leaving you with error prone, time-consuming manual workarounds. When things do go wrong you often find you are ‘piggy in the middle’ with multiple vendors, nothing getting resolved in a hurry and guest service suffers. With Alacer, it’s seamless. We have one number to call and the support, if we do need it, is exceptional, often going above and beyond. When you then stand back and reflect that your overall system spend is also lower, the real ongoing value hits home”.

DEVELOPING A VALUABLE PARTNERSHIP

“Beyond helpdesk support, Alacer have become a trusted partner to our business. We know the Alacer team, and they know our business. We have a training passport that allows us to book training for new recruits when needed and the training is hands-on and structured, ensuring that team members are well placed to get the best from the system. Updates and account management are regular and free and yet the Alacer team have always asked for, and been open to, feedback and looked for more ways to support our operations. As a result, the Alacer system has evolved with and supported our business as it has grown, pivoted and diversified through the industry-wide challenges of recent years, offering new features and even new modules to address new challenges.

CUSTOMER DRIVEN, JUST LIKE US

Updates and enhancements demonstrate Alacer’s wider industry relationships and expertise, often delivering unexpected benefits. We’ve also been able to feed into and influence system developments and solutions too, ensuring they meet our specific needs. It’s refreshing to work with Alacer because it’s clear that they are driven by supporting their customers, not just extracting revenue! We’ve had several examples of this with Alacer, such as their gift voucher platform, which removed a real pain point and delivered additional revenue and cash flow benefits, free takeaway and order at table apps to support us in the nightmare of lockdown or adapting to our hardware to automate management of access control. We are now feeding back on the phenomenal new online bedroom booking engine and updates to the membership and golf systems, which we will launch this year and will mean that every aspect of our business is run by Alacer”.

A LASTING SOLUTION AND RELATIONSHIP

When Roger was asked if he would recommend Alacer he said “We’ve been with Alacer for a long time considering the ever-changing technology landscape, which speaks volumes. I would thoroughly recommend the Alacer system, particularly for a business with a wide range of operations like ours. The comprehensive and seamless functionality, removal of troublesome interfaces, single monthly fee and inclusive customer support make switching an easy decision. Beyond that, the ongoing support and product developments ensure that the system keeps delivering. Other providers still approach us, but we remain clear that Alacer is the right answer for sites like ours and disparate systems would be a backwards step, costing more and creating problems”.



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