

# CASE STUDY

## THE ESTATE YOUNTVILLE



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### PROBLEM TO SOLVE

The Estate Yountville, a high-end luxury resort in the heart of Napa Valley's wine region, relies on multiple POS, PMS, accounting interface and data backup systems to manage reservations and deliver the very highest level of service to its guests. When the sudden resignation of the property's IT manager created a precarious knowledge vacuum, the resort was left without continuous IT support.

### SOLUTION

To avoid future lapses in IT support and an over-reliance on personnel, The Estate partnered with managed IT provider Sidewerks to deliver skilled, 24/7 side-by-side support. Director of Finance Edgar Sosa says the decision was motivated by Sidewerks' deep expertise in the hospitality industry and reputation for fast and reliable troubleshooting.

### RESULTS

In addition to what Sosa calls "10 out of 10" remote and on-site service from Sidewerks, The Estate now saves as much as \$40,000 annually in reduced staffing costs.





Steps away from the vineyards surrounding Napa Valley’s charming Yountville, The Estate offers guests the chance to live and breathe the storied wine region’s rich culture. With its sun-drenched vistas and rolling hills, Napa has become one of the nation’s most romantic destinations and The Estate and its sister property, the exquisite Hotel Villagio, are no exception. The luxury resort spans 22 acres of lush countryside – a village-within-a-village where guests can browse an array of high-end retail shops, enjoy the romance of a private spa or dine at one of the property’s many celebrity chef-owned restaurants. And behind the scenes of this sprawling new lifestyle concept, The Estate’s expansive IT infrastructure keeps all of these services running seamlessly.

Among the property’s most critical assets are the computer hardware, software, point of sale, property management, accounting interface and data backup systems that manage its reservations, process payments and facilitate security – in essence, everything short of keeping the lights on.

Seamlessness is no small feat for a resort as large as The Estate, however, where each outbuilding may connect through different servers with unique systems. That’s why Director of Finance Edgar Sosa says having timely IT support is paramount.

### Continuity in IT support keeps valuable systems knowledge in-house and eliminates the risk of staff turnover

Like many things, a high-functioning IT infrastructure may not be fully appreciated until it fails, however. And complex systems often encounter problems on a fairly frequent basis. While traditionally, a full-time onsite IT manager would be responsible for troubleshooting and continuous improvement, hotels like The Estate are increasingly finding the traditional model inadequate. In a high-turnover industry like hospitality, staff may depart without warning, taking hard-earned systems knowledge with them, Sosa explains. The Estate first experienced this

knowledge vacuum when in 2018 a skilled IT manager resigned suddenly, leaving Sosa shortstaffed and in the unenviable position of having to fill a role that would require a significant onboarding period.

It might take weeks for a new hire to become familiar with The Estate’s diversified IT infrastructure – time in which even a simple systems outage could be catastrophic for the business. Sosa explains that continuity is key; when the resort depends on rapid troubleshooting to maintain smooth system functioning, it is exposed to risk anytime personnel turns over. This could mean missed reservations, internet outages, the inability to process payments – all things that would invariably disrupt guests’ experience.

So in the face of his IT manager’s resignation, rather than bringing on new staff, Sosa placed a call to managed IT provider Sidewerks.

### An IT provider with deep hospitality industry expertise

Sidewerks provides 24/7 remote and onsite support specifically geared toward hotel IT infrastructure. The company’s years of hospitality industry experience, Sosa explains, made them the obvious choice to replace fulltime IT staff at The Estate. With Sidewerks’ deep knowledge of a wide range of hotel and restaurant systems – and their track record of troubleshooting challenging IT issues – the service hit the ground running in no time. While Sidewerks is not alone in the managed IT space, others don’t have the same level of hotel systems knowledge, Sosa explains. And that specialty expertise is critical. “[Sidewerks Principal Consultant] Brad Karl has over 20 years of experience understanding hotels’ needs,” Sosa says. “Sidewerks takes care of any problem right away.”

### When a fiber-optic cable is severed, Sidewerks sends in the A-team

In one memorable case, a construction crew mistakenly severed The Estate’s underground fiber-optic cable, causing widespread outages. The result could have been catastrophic for the

business, but Sidewerks immediately deployed expert staff on-site and the problem was resolved in less than 24 hours.

“Without Sidewerks, all of the issues that we’re facing would be really, really difficult to get through,” Sosa says. “They can handle any problem, very calmly and professionally, interfacing with our systems. They do a phenomenal job to be honest.” Since the company was first brought in to manage The Estate’s IT systems, Sidewerks has provided a range of both remote and on-site support – with in-person visits averaging about once every month or two, in Sosa’s estimation. Another benefit, he explains, has been an annual savings of \$30,000 to \$40,000 in reduced staffing costs, with no change in the level of service.

Sidewerks’ response, he says, has always been “pretty immediate,” regardless of the time of day; “Sidewerks is a 10 out of 10.”

“Sidewerks reacts right away to any problem that comes up. Their team will look at it from every angle, [and consider] possible solutions going forward so that we don’t have that problem again in the future.”  
–Edgar Sosa, Director of Finance

### MARKETING PARTNERS

