



TelePresence Rooms in Hotels Globally

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Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc and Tata Communications, a leading provider of the new world of communications, today announced a partnership agreement as part of an ambitious plan to roll out public Telepresence rooms worldwide.

The agreement will significantly increase Tata Communications' network of public Cisco TelePresence rooms with 10 new facilities opening in Starwood hotels by the end of 2009. The first telepresence suites are planned for Sheraton New York Hotel & Towers, Sheraton on the Park in Sydney, Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel, The Westin Los Angeles Airport and W Chicago-City Center. Looking ahead, Starwood anticipates expanding the offering to hotels in key international business markets like Brussels, Paris, Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo. Tata Communications Telepresence Service will provide Starwood and its guests an "in person" meeting experience with participants in rooms around the world.

"We believe that public telepresence rooms are the key to increasing the accessibility of telepresence beyond major company offices to their wider ecosystem of users – customers, suppliers, remote workers and business partners. Using managed telepresence services is 'better than being there' and helps companies hold more productive meetings without incurring travel and time costs. More team members can participate in meetings and collaborate around the world," said John Landau, Senior Vice President Global Managed Services from Tata Communications.

"We intend to make telepresence available to as many users as possible with our global network of public telepresence rooms and our suite of managed telepresence networks services for businesses. Our partnership with Starwood is a major step towards making this vision a reality," added Landau.

"Starwood has made a name for itself as an innovator in the hotel industry, and it is crucial that we continue to evolve our meetings offerings to address the needs of today's consumers," said Christie Hicks, Senior Vice President of Global Sales for Starwood. "The partnership with Tata Communications is yet another opportunity for us to bring innovative, cutting-edge technology to our properties, and add true value for our business and conference facilities' guests."

“With global companies under increasing pressure to foster productivity at the least cost, the need for public telepresence rooms is greater than ever. Telepresence that is available on a per use basis enables affordable, high quality communication for the small and medium business or remote/regional office worker. Because of the decentralized nature of business today, without public room deployments, telepresence can never achieve the critical mass needed to realize the full potential of this exciting video technology. Tata Communications is aggressively investing and building public telepresence rooms to help achieve this potential and meet the needs of the global workplace,” said Paul Waadevig, Senior Consultant on Unified Communications, Frost and Sullivan.

Cisco TelePresence provides life-like, high definition, conferencing facilities with superior audio, video and environmental qualities allowing participants to meet their colleagues, customers and business partners across a virtual table. The public facility offers users who do not have Telepresence rooms in their companies, access to this cutting-edge technology at an affordable per hour rental rate. Tata Communications has several operational public rooms in India (Mumbai, Bangalore (x2), Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi and Gurgaon), UK (London) and USA (Boston), and has recently announced an agreement to manage a public room in Manila for PLDT in the Philippines.

Tata Communications is unique in offering a comprehensive Cisco-certified TelePresence network consisting of hosted and managed service within private networks, between the world’s first public rooms and soon, across an open global telepresence exchange. Later this year, Tata Communications plans to launch its Global Meeting Exchange service that will conveniently support business-to-business sessions between any telepresence rooms (public or private) subscribed to the service, regardless of the network service provider. This pioneering global service framework pushes Telepresence from being a private intra-company experience to supporting the strong demand for open inter-company sessions. European CEO Magazine named Tata Communications the Best Managed Telepresence Service Provider of the Year.
(Courtesy: NetEvents)