As one of Australia’s largest cinema groups, HOYTS’ emphasis on exceptional customer experiences has seen it thrive and grow through more than 100 years of operation. The group manages more than 450 cinema screens across Australia and New Zealand, with its subsidiaries Val Morgan and VMO dominating the cinema advertising and Digital Out of Home (DOOH) markets Australia-wide.

Challenge
Keeping digital-minded consumers hooked on the cinema experience

Online media consumption has spurred HOYTS to take its business up a level – personalising and deepening the customer experience of its cinemas with digital technology. Doing so, however, required infrastructure that would connect moviegoers with HOYTS’ growing digital services in a fast, secure, and relevant manner.

“Our focus on digital is a high priority for HOYTS in general,” says Adam Wrightson, General Manager, HOYTS Cinema Technology Group. “Everything we’re doing is centred around the customer and improving their experience.” That was, however, proving difficult under HOYTS’ previous incumbent service provider, with Wrightson’s team struggling to get a sufficiently high-touch level of support and strategic counsel to confidently forge onward.

Solutions
- Engaging customers amidst increasing digital competition
- Keeping the cinema relevant as digital technology evolves
- A need for end-to-end IT management with innovative counsel
- Single-vendor management of all IT infrastructure needs
- Dedicated Infrastructure Specialist from NTT to help with quotations and technology consulting
- End-to-end lifecycle management of IT infrastructure including maintenance and renewal
- Aruba Networks WLAN network for cinemas and back office

Benefits
- Growing customer engagement and satisfaction
- Quick turnaround time for infrastructure requirements
- Seamless, reliable IT infrastructure for cinemas nationwide
- Innovations using the latest technologies to meet future needs

HAVING A SERVICE PROVIDER THAT NOT ONLY HAS THE EXPERIENCE, BUT ALSO ACCESS TO THE STOCK AND ABLE TO DELIVER THEM WITHIN A SHORT TIMEFRAME IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO US

“We were looking for a new service provider who was able to provide all our IT requirements from procurement of equipment right through to consulting and other ICT services,” Wrightson says. “After reviewing the market, we felt that NTT ICT had the pedigree, resources, and customer service approach that we were looking for.”
Case Study: HOYTS

Solution
Seamless maintenance and digital innovation from NTT ICT

In 2014, HOYTS made the switch to NTT Communications ICT Solutions (NTT ICT) as its end-to-end technology service provider, consolidating management of all IT resources from cabling and monitors to storage and networking. With most of its infrastructure running on Hewlett-Packard Enterprise (HPE) technology, HOYTS saw significant value in working with NTT ICT – one of HPE’s largest partners in Australia – to manage software licences and maintenance agreements, across both HPE’s products and a broader range of vendors. NTT ICT also supports HOYTS’ technology requirements from more than 10 different vendors; manages the cinema group’s high volume of technical requests; and offers strategic counsel during refresh cycles and other major infrastructure changes.

“Having a service provider that not only has the experience, but also access to the stock and able to deliver them within a short timeframe is really important to us,” says Wrightson. “NTT ICT operates like an extension of our IT department. Apart from the screen and projector, they provide virtually every other piece of technology in our cinemas – as well as the ideas on how to constantly take our infrastructure further to improve our customers’ experience. If there’s anything we need, we are able to pick up the phone and ask for help. Even if NTT ICT aren’t able to help directly, they are able to bring in other partners to make sure we get the advice and service that we require.”

When HOYTS embarked on its digital innovation strategy NTT ICT was right next to them. The customer-focused solution saw NTT ICT refresh both HOYTS’ internal network infrastructure and its cinemas to operate on the same Aruba Networks next-generation wireless platform. NTT ICT installed a large fleet of Aruba wireless access points in HOYTS cinemas nationwide, supporting their integration with the rest of HOYTS’ cinema and back-office infrastructure. The integrated network provides a channel through which to deliver value-added services to HOYTS’ customers and operational staff. For example, it enables mobile device ordering and payments for food and beverage within HOYTS LUX auditoriums so customers never have to leave their seats. The platform also allows customers to buy tickets online and go straight into the cinema without ever having to line up by having their e-ticket scanned at the entry to the cinemas.

“Our relationship with vendors kept the costs of the solution low and minimised many of the usual teething issues you’d face with such a large-scale project utilising several different technologies,” said Tarquin Bellinger, COO, NTT ICT. “We’ve built up sold expertise with not just HPE but numerous other vendors around the country and worldwide, which has really helped us deliver trusted counsel and solutions to HOYTS across their entire infrastructure portfolio. NTT ICT’s infrastructure division runs as a well-oiled machine – we can turn around quotations in minutes, and take on multiple daily queries with ease, giving HOYTS the responsiveness it needs to keep its show business on the road.”

Benefits
Five-star customer experiences, now and for the future

Working with NTT ICT has allowed HOYTS to roll out a range of new customer-facing enhancements, including paperless tickets and in-cinema ordering of food and beverages supported by the Aruba wireless network. NTT ICT’s approach to infrastructure has also helped boost the reliability and uptime of HOYTS’ back-end digital services, ensuring greater business continuity for its nationwide operations. The cinemas’ digital transformation, however, has only just begun.

“We’re redeveloping our website and working towards further integration of food and beverage ordering to let customers order from their seats or on their way to the cinema,” says Wrightson. “Through the Aruba WiFi technology customers can make transactions easily when they are in the cinema and have food delivered to them, further reducing the friction of a transaction and further enhancing the overall user experience. NTT ICT’s expertise in whole-of-business IT infrastructure has really helped us stay at the cutting edge of digital, create an increasingly seamless user experience in our cinemas, and keep our customers coming back for more.”

“While we use HPE’s technology almost exclusively across our cinemas for servers, storage, and networking,” says Wrightson. “NTT ICT is able to offer the full range of services we require including management and renewal of maintenance agreements and software licences across a broad range of different products from different vendors, not just HPE. For me, that’s something with added value and a key benefit of working with NTT ICT.”

As part of the relationship, NTT ICT frequently hosts “Techie Movie Nights” at HOYTS’ cinemas, inviting IT leaders from numerous industries to hear about new solutions, enjoy a movie together – and get a behind-the-scenes look at HOYTS’ infrastructure. “They love seeing just how digitised the back-end of the cinema really is, and how all these different pieces of technology function together to give them the movie experience they end up seeing in the theatre,” says Bellinger. “It’s a great story, and we’re really grateful that Adam and his team continue to see such lasting value in our solutions and expertise.”

“Over the last few years our relationship has grown from strength to strength and I’m a big believer of doing business with people and companies that you trust,” says Wrightson. “We’ve built a relationship of trust based on timely delivery, a good track record and reliability. Being able to lean on our service provider to help us through all manner of IT projects is extremely important to us, and that’s what we’ve found with NTT ICT.”