

City of Tequila Gears Up for a Smart Future With Hitachi



INDUSTRY

Government

SOLUTIONS

Lumada Video Insights
Hitachi Smart Spaces

SOFTWARE

Hitachi Video Analytics



Challenge:

To boost opportunities for local people, Tequila needed to increase the town's tourism potential by making better use of its resources.



Solution:

Tequila has embarked on an ambitious smart city transformation using technologies from Hitachi to help capture, integrate, protect, and analyze data.

Outcome:

Increased tourism has helped to create new jobs and new opportunities and encourage social, commercial, urban and ecological change.

Vision

The community is working together to shape the next wave of smart city developments, which will boost the town's profile around the world.

Overview

With culture, heritage and a unique national drink, the Mexican town of Tequila has already captured the world's attention.

But now it's about to become famous for a completely different reason: The town is going digital in spectacular style. It doesn't just want to be a smart town: By 2040, it wants to be a smart city.

The Challenge: Maximize Tequila's Tourism Potential

The volcanic slopes and blue agave fields that surround Tequila have been silent witnesses to significant change in the last two decades. Although the town has a great industrial history and has attracted UNESCO heritage status, opportunities for growth were limited. This resulted in problems with employment, migration and the disintegration of families.

To help create more jobs and more opportunities, the town's leaders decided to ramp up the tourism potential around the world-renowned drink. "We've done a 180-degree turn and changed the town's vocation: 15 years ago, around 450 people were employed in tourism, today it's more than 5,000," reveals Federico de Arteaga, planning director at Grupo JB.

The employment opportunities in Tequila, which has been classified as a "Magic Town" due to its importance to Mexican heritage, are still growing. The number of tourists visiting the town, which has a population of just 40,000 people, is expected to hit 1.4 million in 2020 compared with just 131,000 in 2005.

"Tequila has a lot of riches besides our national drink that we can promote to tourists," says Francisco Hernandez, who heads up a prestigious gastronomic group with four restaurants in the town. "We are surrounded by breathtaking scenery and can offer great gastronomic and cultural experiences."

To make the most of the tourism potential, Tequila wants to improve the facilities available to both visitors and citizens. "It's very important that we understand how well our town is functioning 24/7," explains José Alfonso Magallanes, municipal president of Tequila. "We want to provide the best in connectivity, accessibility and mobility, and we want everyone that visits Tequila to leave with a smile."

As the volume of visitors increases and puts greater pressure on the town's infrastructure, Tequila needs to be able to capture and analyze data on everything from sidewalk safety to restaurant capacity. "Our data was too fragmented to extract meaningful insights. We needed to create an integrated repository of information that enables all the stakeholders in the town to make better decisions," explains de Arteaga.

The Solution: Smarter Insights for a Smarter City

To achieve its smart city ambitions, Tequila has partnered with government organizations and IT providers as well as local companies and community groups. "We want to make Tequila better than it already is by enabling technological, educational and social change," explains de Arteaga, who is spearheading the smart city initiative. "Hitachi immediately understood our vision and the challenges we faced around data integration and scale."

Tequila is using a number of Hitachi solutions, including Lumada Video Insights and Hitachi Smart Spaces, including Hitachi Video Analytics (HVA). HVA features, such as Traffic Analyzer, Parking Space Analyzer, Social Media Analytics, People Counter and Intrusion Detector, allow the city to capture, integrate, protect and analyze data: past and present. "With support from Hitachi, we can leverage the power of big data in a strategic way," says de Arteaga.

They have invested in an intelligent system for managing the overall tourism experience. Today, they have 15 working cameras, APs and sensors that have been positioned around the town to capture data on people and traffic volumes as well as the frequency of visits to restaurants and shops. With the Parking Space Analyzer and People Counter from Hitachi, Tequila can turn this data into valuable insights around visitor experience, behaviour and safety.

"We want to help communities around the world create hospitable environments for people to live and work," comments Sergio Severo, president and manager, Latin America and Caribbean at Hitachi Vantara. "Our solutions will equip Tequila with meaningful analytics that can be used to drive beneficial actions."

To help gauge the success of its smart city efforts, Tequila uses Hitachi's Smart Spaces and Video Intelligence to track and visualize public sentiment across a range of sources, including social media, public wi-fi, capacity planning for local businesses and traffic monitoring across the town.

As the smart city initiative gains momentum, Tequila will exploit the data it captures in real time to help residents and visitors make better choices about where to visit, eat and park. For example, intelligent displays will be positioned around the town to highlight the wait times for parking lots and restaurant tables as availability and capacity changes.

A command center where data can be aggregated and analyzed in real-time in Mexico City has been established to support the "Tequila Inteligente" project. "By making smarter use of data, we can make smarter use of all of Tequila's resources," says Hernandez.



The Outcome: A Richer Experience for Tourists and Citizens

The ability to make data-driven decisions will be key to supporting Tequila's growing tourism industry and expanding the town's infrastructure.

"Today's tourists want authentic and unique experiences, but they also want to always be connected," comments Roberto Delgado, the CEO of Mundo Cuervo, the tourism and hospitality division of Grupo JB. "The smart city initiative will enable Tequila to better meet the needs of both visitors and citizens and become a world-class tourist destination."

By creating thousands of jobs in the town, tourism has contributed to a reduction in poverty and population migration rates. It has also inspired greater collaboration between the town's businesses. "Restaurants are now communicating rather than competing with each other," explains Hernandez. "By working together to deliver a positive visitor experience, we will encourage people to return."

The town's digitalization efforts have already attracted the attention of the Mexican government and it hopes to become a global best practice example of a smart city. "People have to find their own definition of a smart city," says de Arteaga. "We've combined social, commercial, urban and ecological change to create the best future possible for Tequila."

By maximizing connectivity, mobility and accessibility, Tequila will be able to live up to its Magic Town status on every level. "The initiative has already inspired greater investment and entrepreneurship in the town," says Alfonso Magallanes. "With Hitachi, we can keep building on our success so that everyone benefits from Tequila becoming a smart city."

Vision: A small town makes a big impact

By 2040, the smart city initiative will encompass every space and every service across Tequila. The town's leaders are even thinking about using sensors in public parks to detect soil water levels and automate the use of sprinkler systems.

"Tequila has a great history and a great future," says de Arteaga. "Tequila Inteligente will be a building block for the future and enable people to make smarter predictions and better decisions."

Feedback from tourists and citizens will help shape the next wave of the smart city transformation. "The community is united in working towards the same purpose," says Moises Garcia, the communication coordinator for Grupo JB. "It really feels like smart Tequila belongs to everyone."

The smart city initiative hasn't just given the local people a sense of purpose, it's also given them a sense of pride. "We're a town of just 40,000 inhabitants yet we have some of the most advanced technology in the world," comments Delgado. "By blending our unique culture with our smart city vision, we've opened the world's eyes to the riches of Tequila."

As communities like Tequila continue to lead the way as a smart city, the partnership with Hitachi works towards developing technology solutions that help improve the lives of individual citizens and entire communities.