CASE STUDY

LUXURIOUS WI-FI GREETS GUESTS AT DUSIT THANI DUBAI

Dusit Thani
DUBAI

When Dubai's five-star Dusit Thani luxury hotel decided to upgrade guest access from wired to wireless, IT Manager Bertram Shajiev needed a robust solution that wouldn't break the budget. "It was our first wireless guest network," he explains. "We knew we would require a solid solution."

At first, Shajiev consulted with his existing networking partner. "I'm a Cisco guy," he says. "But the quotes we received were so high and the maintenance costs so expensive that it would have been difficult financially."

In all, the Dusit Thani IT staff had to blanket 321 rooms and suites of the Thai-themed hotel with Wi-Fi access. Additionally, a 600-seat ballroom, numerous meeting rooms and an executive boardroom required coverage. Plus, the system needed to be secure and able to meet PCI (payment card industry) standards.

For a solution, Dusit Thani turned to its IT partner, Precedence Technologies, also of the UAE. "Precedence advised us to consider Aruba," says Shajiev. "I visited some existing Aruba sites – it definitely looked better from the financial perspective. The fact that Aruba also does the wireless side for Lucent helped persuade us too."

Sealing the deal was Aruba's model of working through local-expert partners such as Precedence. This meant Dusit Thani IT staff didn't need to develop its own installation and other specialty skills. Instead, it could assign those tasks to Precedence and stay focused on other business-critical projects.

REQUIREMENTS
- High-performance, secure wireless network to meet the expectations of luxury-hotel guests and comply with payment card industry (PCI) standards.
- Excellent value with minimal ongoing support requirements.
- Scalable to meet organizational needs as they develop.

SOLUTION
- Aruba AP-93 and AP-105 Access Points
- Aruba 3400 and 3600 Mobility Controllers
- AirWave Network Management (planned upgrade)

BENEFITS
- Blankets the facility with high-performance, secure wireless network access for thousands of guests annually.
- Performs beyond expectations for superior user experiences.
- Provides exceptional value with low support needs.
- Offers affordable scaling to address the rapidly increasing number of mobile devices accessing the network simultaneously.

"Our Aruba wireless network is an important factor in achieving our goal for Dusit properties to be the preferred hotels for Dubai visitors."
Bertram Shajiev
IT Manager, Dusit Thani Dubai

"We appreciated the involvement of Precedence," Shajiev says. "They were very competent and had a really good focus on developing our network. For instance, they took care of pulling cables to replace the old LAN infrastructure and did a professional job."

According to Tanveer Mohamed, Director of Precedence, modern Wi-Fi infrastructure goes beyond getting sufficient wireless coverage. "We always try to explain that density, security and the applications you can run on top of the network are also important," he says. "And, it's about how wireless access can be a marketing tool for your business."

GETTING THE RIGHT SOLUTION

To meet Dusit Thani's needs, Precedence recommended Aruba AP-93 access points in the guest rooms and AP-105s in the banquet, meeting and public areas, where the user density is higher. For management, Precedence advocated Aruba 3400 and 3600 Mobility Controllers.

"We suggested Aruba for a number of reasons," says Tanveer. "As a systems integrator we want to install the most appropriate solution. We had worked with Aruba before and we know that the company's solutions have the ability to identify and fingerprint devices, applying the appropriate quality of service for each type of device.

"With Aruba," he continues, "the customer is happy, and we receive fewer support calls. Plus it's easy to add important applications such as the Aruba ClearPass Access Management System [for guest access] and Aruba AirWave Network Management [for network optimization]."

Precedence's specialist knowledge proved valuable during network commissioning, when the integrator was able to track down and solve a particularly perplexing problem. After installing and configuring the Aruba solution, performance in the public areas was poor due to unexpected interference.

Tanveer's team determined the source of the interference was the signal from a 3G mobile phone antenna, which was too close to the 2.4-GHz Wi-Fi frequency band. The Precedence crew leveraged Aruba's adaptive wireless technology to engineer a solution.

Because the Aruba AP-105 access points are dual band – operating at both 2.4-GHz and 5-GHz –Precedence configured the access points (APs) to push most users to the 5-GHz band. "Newer smartphones and other devices operate at 5-GHz," he explains. "We made 2.4-GHz a secondary option just for those older devices that can't do 5-GHz."

The only real difficulty the Dusit Thani team has had was not related to Aruba but Internet bandwidth. "Leased lines are expensive in the Middle East," says Shajiev. "When the hotel is full, our Internet connection can be slow. We plan to add bandwidth aggregation and merge a couple of ADSL [asymmetric digital subscriber line] connections with our leased line for extra download capacity."

ARUBA EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

For Dusit Thani, the benefits from contracting with Aruba far exceeded original expectations. In fact, performance is so superior that Shajiev shared data about the investment with Dusit Thani headquarters in Bangkok. "I suggested making Aruba standard across our properties, installing it in any new hotels we build," he says. "It solves a lot of problems. Also, Aruba can provide training on wireless networks for in-house administrators. I recommend that too."

With the use of mobile devices still rocketing, Shajiev is now considering upgrades to Dusit Thani's Aruba wireless network: "First, we'll buy a third Mobility Controller for extra reliability," he says. "And we'll upgrade the existing ones – that's just new software, which is a savings. Then, in areas where coverage is now a bit weak, we'll add 20 more .

"After that," he adds, "we are interested in implementing AirWave Network Management. This will make administration and monitoring easier, enabling us to help guests more effectively if they have problems."

Overall, Shajiev considers the Aruba wireless network implementation a significant success. "We're really happy with it," he says. "And we're ready to recommend it to others. Our goal is that Dusit [International] properties are the preferred hotels for Dubai visitors, and our Aruba network is an important factor in achieving that goal."

ABOUT ARUBA NETWORKS

Aruba Networks (NASDAQ:ARUN) is a leading provider of next-generation network access solutions for the mobile enterprise. Its Mobile Virtual Enterprise (MOVE) architecture unifies wired and wireless network infrastructures into one seamless access solution, enabling entities of all sizes to securely address the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) phenomenon, dramatically improving productivity and lowering capital and operational costs.

Based in Sunnyvale, California, Aruba has operations throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific regions.

To learn more, visit http://www.arubanetworks.com or get real-time updates on Twitter and Facebook. For the latest technical discussions on mobility and related solutions, visit Airheads Social at http://community.arubanetworks.com.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

The Dusit Thani Dubai is an iconic five-star hotel in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Located in the center of Dubai's vibrant Business District, the luxury Thai-themed hospitality establishment offers 321 rooms and suites with a 600-seat ballroom. It is a part of the Dusit International family of hotels and resorts based in Bangkok, Thailand.

aruba®
N E T W O R K S

1344 CROSSMAN AVE | SUNNYVALE, CA 94089
1.866.55.ARUBA | T: 1.408.227.4500 | FAX: 1.408.227.4550 | INFO@ARUBANETWORKS.COM

www.arubanetworks.com