

CASE STUDY

SOUTH AFRICA



HOSPITALITY

**HIGH PERFORMANCE NETWORK PROVIDES  
THE PLATFORM FOR CONSISTENT GUEST  
EXPERIENCES AND NEW DIGITAL SERVICES**



Standardise network management and experience across hotel properties throughout Africa, with zero-touch provisioning and centralised management.



Feline Fields by Mantis in Botswana is a 50-minute helicopter ride from the nearest airport. Deep in the Kalahari Desert, you are more likely to see a passing elephant than a passing car.

“We operate some of the world’s finest eco-resorts,” says Clinton Govender, Director IT Customer Technology Services, Southern Africa, Accor, the hotel group that has a 50% stake in the Mantis business. “Guests come to experience nature, to escape from the modern world. Yet sometimes they want to connect to the internet.”



### Establishing Network Consistency Across a Global Business

For Mantis, network connectivity can be challenging. The business operates 22 hotels in 10 countries, the majority of which are in rural or remote locations. Not all are static: the company also has houseboats on the Chobe River. And they tend to be small. A few have up to 80 rooms and some comprise no more than six rooms.

Partnership with the global hotel group Accor in 2018 was a key turning point. Needing to be integrated with Accor IT systems and having to meet certain infrastructure standards, Mantis was ready to rethink its network. With the hospitality sector undergoing digital transformation, Mantis wanted to establish a platform on which to add its own digital guest and operational services.

“We needed to bring Mantis’ systems into the Accor ecosystem and we needed to establish consistent Accor standards in the business,” says Clinton. “The ability to deploy, monitor and manage the network centrally was key.”

### REQUIREMENTS

- Ensure consistent, high-performance Wi-Fi across diverse collection of properties
- Reduce support costs through central management and remote diagnostics
- Demonstrate value to hotel operators with pay-per-use consumption model

### SOLUTION

- Wi-Fi 6 Aruba Unified Access Points
- Layer 2 Access Switches
- Aruba Central Cloud Management Platform

### OUTCOMES

- Delivers network consistency for the first-time, both in terms of performance and management
- Establishes a consistent platform on which to deploy new digital services
- Simplifies the task of supporting network infrastructure in remote locations

### Managing a Continent’s Connectivity From a Central Point

The Aruba approach is built around Aruba Central, AP-515 Wi-Fi 6 Unified Access Points and Aruba 2530 Layer 2 POE+ Access Switches. Built on a cloud-native microservices architecture, Aruba Central delivers full-service AI insights, security and infrastructure oversight for Mantis’ remote networks – all from a single pane of glass. It enables Clinton, for the first time, to view and





“ We found Aruba Central to be simple and effective. It is an example of the type of cloud-based solution we are looking to adopt throughout the region. ”

**CLINTON GOVENDER**

Director IT Customer Technology Services, Southern Africa, Accor

manage the networks at Mantis properties throughout Africa from his Johannesburg office. The team is able to define secure guest, staff and admin networks on the same infrastructure.

“During testing we found Aruba Central to be simple and effective. It is an example of the type of cloud-based solution we’re looking to adopt throughout the region,” Clinton says. “Plus, it was a low-cost investment with the kind of pay-per-use model we favoured.”

**Simplifying the Task of Managing and Maintaining IT Infrastructure**

In November 2020, the first Mantis property had moved across to the Aruba architecture. The 71-room Pearl Valley Hotel by Mantis, near Cape Town, is one of Mantis’ newer and larger properties. Mantis plans to roll-out to other properties in its portfolio later in the year.



Clinton says Aruba fundamentals will be common in all future roll-outs: “The advantage of Aruba is that, with a standard architecture agreed, we can roll-out quickly when required. It can be applied consistently to larger or smaller sites. We don’t need expensive IT support on site. It’s effectively a zero-touch deployment, orchestrated remotely.”

Mantis operates the majority of its hotels under licence, meaning property owners have to justify their investment in the new network infrastructure. Clinton says the ease of installation and ongoing management represents significant value: “You can imagine the difficulty and cost of having IT engineers come out to some of these locations. With Aruba we have a transparent service and much lower cost of deployment.”



**Exploiting Digital Touchpoints to Elevate the Guest Experience**

The Aruba approach creates the required platform on which to digitise elements of the guest experience. This may include self-service check-in, streaming content on smart TVs, online room service or location-based services around a hotel property. Accor IT can now manage the deployment of these new services centrally.

“For guests, we recognise the Mantis experience doesn’t start the moment you enter one of our properties. We need to follow and engage with our guests throughout a digital journey,” says Roger Tabbal, Executive Director of IT Customer Technology Services, Accor, Middle East & Africa, India & Turkey.

Crucially, the Aruba Edge Services Platform (ESP), allows for local differences. Property owners can choose to deploy from a menu of services.

“We know that some digital services are just not wanted or needed at some properties,” adds Roger. “There won’t be a central mandate. But if it is selected, then there will be consistency and no need to reinvent the



wheel. That investment could be better spent elsewhere.”

### Creating a Platform for Business Agility in a Changing World

Without doubt 2020 has been a challenging year for the hospitality sector. Roger is confident Accor will come out of it stronger. The sector expects a surge of demand for travel – and ‘experiential travel in particular’ – once a traveller confidence returns and travel restrictions are eased. The Accor Live Limitless loyalty programme, to which the Mantis Collection has access, has over 65 million members worldwide.

“We have used this time to make necessary changes to the business and to invest in our platforms. We have more shared services and a cleaner digital experience for guests. This creates cost efficiencies and service



consistencies,” Roger says. “The future will be different. What will be key is the ability to identify new opportunities and move quickly. A digital platform gives us agility.”