Case Study: The Keating Hotel

Samsung Wi-Fi Solution Enhances Boutique Hotel's Guest Experience

Overview

Customer Need

The Keating Hotel, a luxury hotel in San Diego, needed to replace its outdated and unsecured Wi-Fi infrastructure. With an increase in guests and devices competing for bandwidth, the hotel's Wi-Fi experience became slow and inconsistent, impacting guest satisfaction. The Keating Hotel required a secure wireless solution that supported tiered services, individual access for guests and business meeting groups, and a dedicated network for its staff.

Samsung Solution

The Keating Hotel worked with Samsung and Samsung authorized partner Hotel Internet Services (HIS) to deploy a wireless solution featuring new access points, controllers, and switches throughout the property. The new Wi-Fi system, which is integrated with the property management system (PMS), enabled the Keating Hotel to provide secure, high-speed connectivity throughout the entire property and assign specific levels of access to employees, guests and business meeting groups.

Results

The Keating Hotel now seamlessly delivers guests a high-quality Wi-Fi experience in line with its luxury accommodations and premium service. Hotel guests receive a free basic Wi-Fi connection or can upgrade to a higher bandwidth connection. Business groups in meeting rooms can also get their own secure network. After installing the new Wi-Fi network, guests have provided positive feedback about the connectivity experience and complaints have significantly declined.

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B U S I N E S S

![Keating logo — EST.1890]

The Customer Need:
Secure and Personal Wireless Access that Meets Guest Expectations

Originally constructed in 1890, the historic Keating building housed some of San Diego's earliest major developments, including its first library and the city's first bank.

In 2007, the new owners wanted to create a luxury, boutique hotel that would provide guests with a unique experience from the moment they walked into the lobby. The owners hired the world-famous Italian design house Pininfarina – which designs for Ferrari and Maserati – to create a daring and unique guest décor that combined cutting-edge Italian design with cool, hip California styling.

The Keating Hotel strives to offer its guests a memorable stay in a historical setting matched with the look and feel of a modern boutique environment and has been featured on CNN and CNBC as well as in Forbes, Condé Nast, and GQ magazines.

The Keating Hotel originally provided basic, complimentary Wi-Fi for its guests and employees. The Wi-Fi network was unsecured, so anyone within range could access and use the network. With so many guests and unauthorized users simultaneously accessing the network, the hotel's Wi-Fi experience did not meet guest expectations.

"The quality of our Wi-Fi didn't match the boutique luxury experience we wanted for our customers," said Keating Hotel General Manager Shane Pappas. "Connections constantly dropped and customers were complaining. Our leisure guests bring multiple mobile devices like tablets and smartphones to stream video or play online games. At the same time, our business guests required secure and uninterrupted access for email and online calls. Our Wi-Fi was so bad it had become a detriment to the guest experience."

The hotel required better network coverage and more control over who accessed its Wi-Fi and how they used it. "We needed a way to provide every single guest with high-quality Wi-Fi all of the time," said Pappas. "It was time to invest and upgrade our wireless platform and infrastructure."

The hotel required a wireless platform that would support tiered services, including basic Wi-Fi for free, and premium Wi-Fi for a fee. To prevent non-guests from accessing the network, the Keating Hotel needed individual and authenticated sign-in capabilities for guests. The hotel also wanted a dedicated network for its staff.

To achieve this level of control, the Keating Hotel would have to integrate its wireless services with the hotel's property management system (PMS). "Integrating with our PMS was one of our biggest challenges and became our primary goal to allow our guests to access their own Internet connection," said Pappas. "But the hotel's internal resources were not technically adept to manage a complex wireless network and we didn't want to overcharge our customers to afford one, so we looked to Samsung to help us upgrade our network."

The Samsung Solution: Samsung's Wi-Fi Solution Delivers Better Coverage, Greater Control

Samsung introduced the Keating Hotel to Hotel Internet Services (HIS), which specializes in providing secured wired and wireless services to hotels and resorts. HIS representative Stephen Nichols started off by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the hotel's wireless network.

Nichols recommended an all-Samsung wireless solution including 10 Samsung WEA303i access points, two Samsung WEC8050 controllers, and a Samsung Ubigate iES4024GP Ethernet switch. He also suggested the HIS FUSION gateway device to connect to the hotel's PMS.

"Knowing that the Keating Hotel required a reliable solution to provide wall-to-wall coverage, the Samsung technology proved to be a good match," said Nichols.

"Many boutique properties have limited staff so building a stable Wi-Fi network for guests can be an expensive and time-intensive task. Samsung's WLAN solutions are ideal for these types of environments as they're very easy to deploy, configure and troubleshoot from its centralized management portal."

HIS installed the new wireless platform and integrated the network with the hotel's PMS program in 48 hours with one technician. Over the next several days, HIS set up the tiered Wi-Fi to support individual guest access, hotel staff access, and business meeting group access.

"The installation was seamless," said Pappas. "We didn't experience any outages in the process of rolling over to the new wireless networks. Our guests had no clue we were transitioning wireless networks. The entire process was quick and painless. And with the HIS support, we don't have to worry about fixing the network if it ever goes down or guests experience any sign-in issues."

Quick Profile:

Samsung WEC8050 Access Point Controller

- Specially optimized for small-medium sized organizations
- Cost effective and easy to deploy
- Accommodates up to 75 APs and 1,500 clients
- Built-in authentication server capable of accommodating 512 users
- Built-in stateful firewall

Samsung WEA303i Access Points

- 802.11n with three spatial streams
- Delivering data rate of up to 450 Mbps
- Built-in security monitoring module (WIPS)
- Samsung's AirEqualizer ensures optimized Wi-Fi services by allocating equal airtime to multiple devices
- Self-organizing network (SON) that allows high level of quality management and reduces design cost

The Results:
High-speed Wi-Fi Fit for "a Ferrari"

By integrating its property management system with the new Samsung wireless network, the hotel can now manage and quickly assign individual networks to employees, guests, and business groups to provide adequate bandwidth and network speeds.

The Keating Hotel offers its guests free basic Wi-Fi or a higher bandwidth connection for a small fee. Guests are also provided with unique, individual logins and business groups can reserve networks for their meetings. HIS also provides 24x7 technical support to quickly resolve issues.
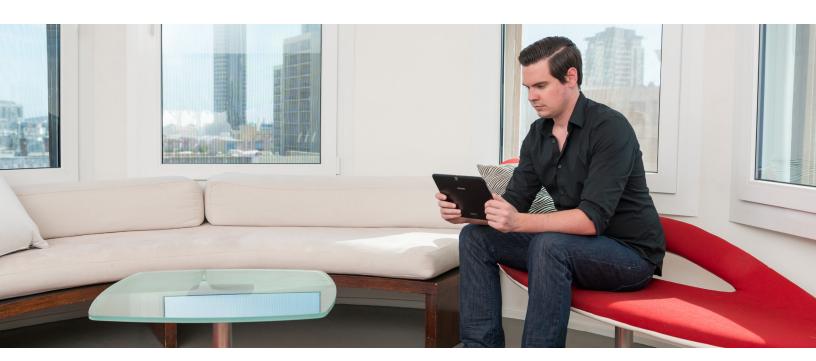
"It's a night and day difference from our previous network solution. We no longer have areas where Wi-Fi isn't accessible, and thanks to the easy integration with our property management system, guest authentication is a breeze," said Keating Hotel Marketing Manager Steven Manners. "The solution was affordable and turnkey. Since we don't have to hire a full IT team to manage the network, we can allocate our budget and our staff to truly deliver a high-touch guest experience."

With strong network connectivity and speeds now available throughout the property, the Keating Hotel has seen guest complaints about the Wi-Fi network essentially disappear. The new network offering and partnership with Samsung also exemplifies the Keating Hotel's philosophy of partnering with top quality brands, helping set itself apart from national chains.

"Samsung's technology has redefined our guest's Wi-Fi experience and at the end of the day it brings true credibility to the hotel," said Manners. "We went out and got the Ferrari of Wi-Fi and that makes a big difference in the unique experience we provide to our guests."

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