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Success Story

Hotel Deploys Wireless Network Solution to Connect Guests and Staff while Preserving Historic Structures

| INDUSTRY | Hospitality | CUSTOMER | The Salutation Hotel | REGION | UK | SOLUTIONS | Zyxel Nebula Solution |

Overview

Challenges

- Provide wireless network connectivity to guests and staff
- Deliver complete signal coverage, despite unusually thick walls and multiple structures on property
- Three separate sites must operate independently with centralized management
- Guest and staff networks need to be independent of each other for added security
- Buildings' historic structures must be preserved

Solutions

- Nebula Cloud Managed PoE Switch
- Nebula Cloud Managed Access Point
- VDSL Router

Benefits

- APs allow for easy and discrete deployment throughout hotel
- Switches provide separate and secure networks for guests and staff
- Strong signals and fast connections are now accessible throughout resort
- Wide range of services can be provided via WiFi network
- Easy management and trouble-shooting with cloud-based via Nebula Control Centre
- Scalable and future-proof for expansion

"As a luxury hotel, we have to constantly stay one step ahead to ensure we're providing a premium experience for our guests. We needed to future-proof our business with a high-performance cloud wireless network that could easily scale to accommodate evolving guest demands."

Melissa Brown
Head of Business Operations

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Background

Ensconced within acres of award-winning gardens, The Salutation is a luxury boutique hotel located in the medieval town of Sandwich. A gateway to the vibrant and storied towns of the Kentish coast, Edwin Lutyens' private-house masterpiece has been completely re-invigorated through successive restorations, featuring 16 guest bedrooms, restaurant and gardens.

The hotel is going through a period of transformation to build for the future, having installed a large commercial

kitchen and hired a Michelin-star chef to launch its new restaurant, which will become the focal point for the business.

As part of this transformation, the hotel recognised the importance of improving its technology infrastructure to provide a premium guest experience and future-proof the business for emerging trends.

Challenges

The Salutation had three key challenges to overcome:

Insufficient WiFi:
Previously the hotel was using a domestic router to power its WiFi network, which was not capable of delivering sufficient wireless connectivity to the business or its guests.

With today's consumers living increasingly connected lifestyles, they now expect a robust wireless network as part of the hotel experience. Therefore, The Salutation needed to deploy a powerful WiFi network to meet this growing demand, while also streamlining other business applications.

Listed building status:
The Salutation is a Grade I listed building, meaning it is a site of exceptional interest and is required to adhere to extremely strict requirements over changes made to the building's interior or exterior.

The walls are also up to one metre thick and wiring is difficult – drilling holes in the walls to mount equipment is not allowed and any equipment deployed in the building should not be visible.

This causes two issues: mobile phone signal and WiFi coverage are largely non-existent within the premises and surrounding gardens. This means guests are completely cut off from the outside world and staff struggle to communicate with each other, especially in emergency situations.

Multiple sites:
The hotel has three main sites and a number of outbuildings and public gardens spread across 3.7 acres. These sites operated independently, so there was a need to bring them together on one centralised network. The hotel also needed to keep its main administration network separate from its guest network, for security reasons.

Solutions and Benefits

The Salutation engaged the services of Zyxel partner The Ardent Group, which conducted a full wireless site survey and recommended deploying Zyxel's Nebula cloud network management solution. This enables the hotel to remotely manage all of its sites on one centralised cloud-based network, from any location.

A managed Gigabit Ethernet switch was installed in the main building, supported by Power over Ethernet (PoE) switches and 20 Nebula access points (APs) deployed throughout the premises. Each building has its own internet breakout via Zyxel's VDSL routers.

The Zyxel switches provide a private virtual LAN (VLAN), enabling the hotel to set up certain networks in independent simulated environments on the same LAN, bringing added network security for guests and staff.

To overcome the issue with the thickness of the walls, The Ardent Group deployed Nebula APs in every guest room and public space to provide sufficient wireless coverage. Because the Nebula APs are a compact size and have PoE capability, it was easy to install them in a discreet manner; thus adhering to the listed building requirements.

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The Salutation now has a high performance, fully scalable wireless network, meaning staff and guests can enjoy fast connectivity throughout the estate. The hotel is also able to run a number of other services on the WiFi, such as its point of sale (POS), phone and sound systems, as well as network ready smart TVs in every guest room to meet the demand for streaming services and content, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime.

To overcome the lack of mobile phone signal, staff are now able to use the WhatsApp mobile messenger app as the primary means of communication throughout the estate. The new wireless network can also be used for WiFi calling and Voice over IP (VoIP).

Fast connectivity for staff and guests was the bedrock, but the hotel also needed to future-proof the network to meet new customer-driven demands. With the number of online services only expected to grow, The Salutation now has a fully scalable network backbone that can easily accommodate any new services.

The Ardent Group manages the entire network remotely via the Nebula management portal (Nebula Control Centre), providing the hotel with peace of mind that any network issues or troubleshooting can be handled by IT experts, before staff or guests are even aware of an issue arising. This means the leadership team can focus solely on running the business and looking after its guests.

With the new network infrastructure in place, The Salutation is able to embrace new ways of streamlining business operations and deliver the most premium experience for guests. For example, the new WiFi network will enable the hotel to better utilise its grounds. Opening up a new bar in the gardens would simply involve adding new wireless APs and POS devices to the network, ensuring it is up and running within minutes.

About Zyxel Communications

Focused on innovation and customer-centricity, Zyxel Communications has been connecting people to the Internet for nearly 30 years. Our ability to adapt and innovate with networking technology places us at the forefront of creating connectivity for telcos and service providers, business and home users. Zyxel is building the networks of tomorrow, unlocking potential, and meeting the needs of the modern workplace — powering people at work, life, and play. Zyxel, Your Networking Ally.