



THE SHERATON DALLAS HOTEL OFFERS GUESTS TEXAS-SIZE BANDWIDTH

MOTOROLA WIRELESS SOLUTIONS



A Motorola wireless system helps the Sheraton Dallas improve guest satisfaction by providing faster and more reliable wireless internet service in guestrooms.

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW:

The Sheraton Dallas is one of the most prominent and successful hotels in the United States, and is located in one of the country's most competitive hospitality markets. Befitting its location, the hotel is a Texas-size operation with 1,840 guest rooms in three high-rise towers, plus more than 300,000 sq. feet of meeting space in its adjacent convention center. It's not surprising that the hotel is also on the cutting edge of advanced communications technology, providing guests with fast, streamlined, easy-to-use Internet service that compares favorably with virtually any other hotel in the world.

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Company

- Sheraton Dallas Hotel
Dallas, Texas

Industry

- Hospitality

Applications

- Guest Services - High-Speed Internet Access

Motorola Solution

- Motorola WLAN infrastructure, including more than 140 AP650 access points

Solution Features

- Wireless 802.11n solution for high-speed Internet connectivity in hotel guest rooms
- Motorola centralized network management system
- More reliable high-speed wireless Internet service

SITUATION:
**WITH INEFFICIENT INTERNET
CONNECTIVITY IN ITS GUEST ROOMS, THE
SHERATON DALLAS NEEDED TO UPGRADE
ITS ACCESS TECHNOLOGY**

Faced with a steadily increasing number of customer demand for faster Internet connectivity issues in guest rooms—especially with the explosive adoption of WiFi enabled devices such as smartphones and new tablet computers—the Sheraton Dallas decided to upgrade the outdated DSL system that served its 1,840 guest rooms. To stay ahead of its formidable competition, the Sheraton Dallas needed to dramatically improve its communications technology to streamline and speed up Internet connectivity to ensure guest satisfaction and enhance guest loyalty.

SOLUTION:
**THE HOTEL REPLACED ITS DSL NETWORK
WITH MOTOROLA WLAN TECHNOLOGY
TO BRING FASTER, MORE RELIABLE
WIRELESS INTERNET CONNECTIVITY TO
GUESTROOMS**

Primarily using internal IT resources, the hotel built out a new Internet infrastructure to its guest rooms, then began a test of a Motorola's WiNG 5 802.11n Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN) solution in one of the hotel's three towers. The old system utilized combined wired DSL/wireless access point units that served both the rooms in which they were located and a number of adjacent rooms. This often caused delays and inconveniences for guests, and it also increased internal troubleshooting and maintenance costs. The Motorola WLAN replaced the inefficient and inconvenient in-room DSL units with just two Motorola access points per floor, usually located at either end of each hallway.

“Over the last few years, our customers’ demand for bandwidth has increased sharply, especially with the growing use of tablet computers. Today, in a competitive market like ours, if you don’t have the latest high-speed Internet access technology you’re at a significant competitive disadvantage.”

Jerry Balousek
Director, Information Technology
Sheraton Dallas Hotel



RESULT:
**FASTER CONNECTION SPEEDS, MORE
OPTIONS SHOW THAT GUESTS ARE
PLEASED WITH THE NEW WIRELESS
INTERNET SERVICE**

By providing virtually unlimited bandwidth for online access, the Sheraton Dallas has seen a substantial increase in guest satisfaction with its in-room Internet service, even for tablet computer usage. While issues with Internet services used to be the single largest type of customer complaint, access complaints have gone to the very bottom of the list with the advent of the new system. This in turn has significantly reduced the time and costs associated with troubleshooting guest room service. In addition, the new Motorola WiNG 5 WLAN has made it easier to increase revenues with a tiered fee structure for guest room Internet that was not possible with the old DSL system. The hotel quickly rolled out the Motorola WLAN to all three towers.

NEW HIGH-SPEED GUEST ROOM WLAN GIVES THE SHERATON DALLAS A CRUCIAL TECHNOLOGY EDGE

In the highly competitive hospitality industry, one of the most important new battlegrounds is technology. The proliferation of mobile computing devices—from laptops to smart phones to tablets and more—is making Internet access more and more important for people both at home and away from home. Business travelers need 24/7 access not just to the Internet, but also to their corporate resources, Intranets and cloud-based applications. Non-business guests are just as reliant on total access for applications ranging from e-mail to social media participation to streaming music and video.

HOSPITALITY, TEXAS-STYLE

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Technology plays a vital role in maintaining the hotel's market leadership. "The fact that we're in such a competitive marketplace means we really try to feature our technology," says Jerry Balousek, director of IT.

"Through our partnerships with data centers in Dallas, we are able to deliver a virtually unlimited amount of bandwidth for Internet service for our guests. We actually provide more bandwidth than any other hotel in the country."

GUESTROOM INTERNET ACCESS UPGRADE

For many hotels, the upgrading of network infrastructures and applications is a never-ending process driven both by advances in communications technology and an increased customer appetite for higher and higher levels of bandwidth. The Sheraton Dallas recently upgraded to Motorola Solutions' wireless technology in guest rooms to serve its customers better and to give it a new competitive advantage. "Guestroom wireless had been on our radar to be replaced due to increased demand for Internet access, especially for new computing devices," says Balousek. "We were getting more and more demand for faster, more flexible access with multiple addresses per guest."

INEFFICIENT AND INCONVENIENT

The reality of having a DSL/wireless access point unit located in one room, but serving a number of adjacent rooms, was proving problematic. People would unplug the DSL unit to plug in their MP3 players or other devices, and then for assistance to get Internet service. Not only that, but other rooms that were served by that unit couldn't get Internet either. "We'd

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CASE STUDY

SHERATON DALLAS

receive a call from a room that had no actual DSL unit, then the technician would have to knock on the door of the room that did have one," Balousek says. "All too often that guest would say 'We don't have a problem, so can you come back later?' That cost us a lot of time and a lot of dollars not to mention customer satisfaction."

CENTRALLY MANAGED WIRELESS

To increase the level of service and reduce the number of complaints, the hotel wanted a solution that was deployed outside the guestrooms. "The biggest thing I was looking for," says Balousek, "was actually centrally managed wireless so we wouldn't have to deal with troubleshooting in individual rooms." The hotel researched a range of systems providers to deploy the new system. "We looked at a number of different providers and decided on the deployment of a Motorola WLAN network," Balousek explains. "I really liked what Motorola had, especially the technology."

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A SUPER BOWL AUDITION

Balousek and the Sheraton Dallas had two recent engagements with Motorola that went a long way toward creating both confidence in the solutions and a close working relationship between the two companies. "The first experience was when Motorola held a sales conference at our hotel, and we worked with them to set up the network," notes Balousek. The second was the 2010 Super Bowl for which the National Football League chose the hotel to be the event's Media Center. "When we had the Super Bowl in Dallas, as part of the event, the NFL had me shut down our wireless for two weeks and brought in Motorola's wireless network to serve the demanding needs of journalists on deadline." The system worked flawlessly, and the Motorola connection with the Sheraton Dallas was strengthened even further.

A SUCCESSFUL TEST

Initially, the hotel decided to install a Motorola's wireless LAN in one tower as a test case to see how the system could increase both performance and management efficiency. The Motorola solution places two access points (APs) on each floor, one on either end of the hallway, to serve the 20 rooms on the floor. With the APs located outside the guestrooms, the IT staff can track down network issues easier, faster and without having to disturb the guests. Balousek has performed heat map tests and found that the Motorola WiNG 5 APs in the hallways delivered more bandwidth even than in-room units. "The system worked so well in the test installation we rolled it out to all three towers," adds Balousek.



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- Jerry Balousek, Director, Information Technology Sheraton Dallas Hotel

MOTOROLA WLAN PERFORMANCE

The hotel is extremely pleased with the system’s technology and performance. “I really like the Motorola WLAN technology,” continues Balousek, “especially the way they’ve designed the access points. They’ve pushed a lot of the intelligence out to the APs from the controllers so they actually use less bandwidth on the network. I’ve seen a lot better throughput on the APs compared to other systems. I’ve also seen our overall bandwidth go up as a result of the system. Motorola’s WiNG 5 architecture eliminates choke points faced by traditional hub-and-spoke architectures by leveraging QoS, mobility, dynamic RF management and security at the edge to offer superior performance for mobile applications such as video and voice.” In addition, the system was very easy to deploy in both installing and configuring the access points.

DECREASED COSTS

With the new centrally managed Motorola guestroom communications system, the hotel has seen significant decreases in the time and cost of troubleshooting. Because the system is deployed outside guestrooms, guests have no access to the physical APs and they can’t unplug them in favor of other devices. “Our IT staff spends much less time tracking down APs that have been unplugged or tampered with,” explains Balousek. “That saves us two to three hours a day.” And those time savings translate directly to cost savings.

DIFFERENTIATED GUEST EXPERIENCES AND INCREASED REVENUES

“With the Motorola access points, we’re able to substantially increase the amount of bandwidth that we make available to our guests,” says Balousek. “We can offer a range of wired and wireless high-speed options, for instance, multiple 10 GB links, 40 GB links, even up to 100 GB, which is about 2,000 times more than the

average hotel. That’s a lot of Internet, and wireless is proving the ideal complement for guests using mobile devices.” The Motorola WLAN also makes it easy for the hotel to create a competitively priced tiered fee-for-service system—which was not possible to do with DSL—that adds to both guest satisfaction and organization revenues.

“Before, if somebody asked for three megabits we couldn’t actually give them three Mbps,” continues Balousek. “Now we can.” There are three tiers in the offering: a basic tier with 3 Mbps of bandwidth and access for a single device; a mid-tier for connectivity for up to three devices and up to 5.5 Mbps; and a highest tier “streaming package” where guests can connect up to five devices with 5.5 Mbps. The hotel also uses its new higher bandwidth capabilities as premiums in its preferred customer rewards program.

NETWORK MANAGEMENT

The hotel is also pleased with the system’s high-level network management tools. With the Motorola network management system, IT can see actual performance data displayed on an easy-to-understand dashboard. “In terms of network management,” notes Balousek, “the Motorola solution has a lot more tools to help us actually see how the wireless network is performing. With some other systems, you can’t actually tell. You just throw a configuration out there and hope for the best.”

WHAT’S NEXT?

With the success of Motorola’s wireless network solution, the hotel is planning on working with Motorola to implement a number of future projects. “The first project we’re planning is the roll out of Motorola access points into all our meeting spaces,” Balousek states. But there are other Motorola solutions the hotel is considering as well. The next is Motorola AirDefense

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security solution, which the hotel worked with during its tenure as the Super Bowl Media Center. “During the Super Bowl, I did some training on the temporary AirDefense system,” notes Balousek, “and we’re looking to bring that system into our meeting spaces to increase security and help troubleshoot interference issues. We’re also considering putting sensors in the guestrooms to help the Help Desk in troubleshooting.” In addition, the hotel is considering the Motorola TEAM (Total Enterprise Access and Mobility) solution to empower its mobile employees. “For example, we’re exploring the use of TEAM Badges,” Balousek explains, “which would, for example, allow housekeepers to use the network to get their room assignments and update them on the fly.”

WHY MOTOROLA?

The Sheraton Dallas IT team gives Motorola high marks in terms of creating and maintaining an excellent working partnership. “One example,” says Balousek, “is in terms of capital expenditures, Motorola was very helpful in working within my budget.” But it’s the combination of cost-efficiency and performance that most gets Balousek and the Sheraton Dallas excited about Motorola solutions. “Ultimately,” Balousek concludes, “from my standpoint the Motorola WLAN system is a better product and less expensive than the alternatives. It’s kind of a no-brainer.”

For more information on how Motorola’s WLAN solutions can improve your hotel operations, please visit us on the web at www.motorolasolutions.com/hospitality. For additional product information visit: www.motorola.com/wlan