

ZyXEL provides Paten Hotels with wireless broadband

Overview

Challenges:

- Four hotels with different network requirements
- To increase occupancy rates and improve customer service through the delivery of internet access
- Two hotels are listed buildings
- No on-site technical staff

Benefits:

- Provide free, easy to manage, wired and wireless Internet access to hotel guests
- Reliable service with minimal calls to help centre
- Future-proof to enable future applications across existing products

ZyXEL wireless solution:

- G-3000H access points
- ES-2024PWR Power over Ethernet managed switches
- ES-2108PWR Power over Ethernet managed switches

ZyXEL wired solution:

- ES-2024PWR managed switches



Free broadband access

Paten Hotels wanted to provide free broadband and wireless access across the group, in all public areas, conference rooms and bedrooms. The coverage needed to be reliable, low maintenance and accessible to clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Paten Hotels was using The Cloud to provide broadband into its hotels. As part of the contract they were tied to the same provider for three years, but the contract was coming to an end. Paten Hotels wanted to provide a free 'added value' service and The Cloud were unable to provide a solution at the time.

Robert Smith, sales and marketing director, Paten Hotels, was behind the decision to upgrade.

"We were already offering broadband to guests, but we really needed to move to a non-charging model to meet customer demands. Hotel Broadband came in to meet us and were quick to understand how important it was to have a reliable, easy-to-use framework in place."

Hotel Broadband made the decision to use ZyXEL products in the implementations. Each of the group's hotels has a different set of products in order to maximise the benefits of the offering for their guests. ZyXEL was chosen because it has a rich feature set and provides exceptional value for the price in the hospitality market.

"It was important to look at the needs of each individual hotel when we did the analysis," commented James Richmond, sales director, Hotel Broadband. "We had the brief from head office to provide straightforward, free wired and wireless broadband, but we had to really think about what each hotel needed rather than rolling out a generic solution for everyone, which just wouldn't have worked."

All hotels benefit from Hotel Broadband's custom developed guest service gateway and remote monitoring to cater for any potential system faults. A guest support helpline is available. Staff at the help centre are able to remotely diagnose any issues with the network at any of the hotels. If this can be sorted out over the phone then someone will help the hotel staff fix the problem. Alternatively, an engineer will be sent to the site to fix any problems within eight business hours of it being reported.

Paten Hotels

Paten Hotels is a small, privately owned group of 3 and 4 star hotels located in the South East and Midlands. The group's hotels include the Bedford Swan Hotel (Bedford), the Langstone Hotel (Havant, near Portsmouth), the Marks Tey Hotel (Colchester) and the Best Western Grosvenor Hotel (Stratford-Upon-Avon).

The philosophy of Paten Hotels is to deliver excellent levels of customer service, attended by pleasant staff, in comfortable surroundings designed to meet the demands of the modern traveller.

Hotel Broadband, a leading provider of high speed Internet solutions, was chosen to undertake the project. Hotel Broadband is a Bristol-based company that provides high speed Internet access to 2-5 star hotels.

ZyXEL provides tailored solutions

The Langstone Hotel in Portsmouth is the biggest hotel in the Paten Group, with 148 rooms. It was important that the installation made use of the network that was already in place in the hotel, so all existing hardwiring to the bedrooms was kept in place. The switches running the wired network were changed to ZyXEL ES-2024PWR managed switches, which provide Power over Ethernet (PoE). These switches not only provide high levels of security, they also offer traffic prioritisation for multi-services, which means they offer future-proofing if the hotel decides to deploy VoIP or other on-demand services.

The hotel also put in six G-3000H wireless access points to cover the public areas and these are connected via the ES-2024PWR switches. The wireless access points were chosen as they have enterprise level security features, whilst offering low operating costs, ideal for providing wireless Internet access in the public areas of the hotel.

In Bedford, the Swan Hotel also required a combination of wired and wireless access for its guests. The wireless connection had to cover the older part of the hotel which was listed and therefore could not be altered to support fixed connectivity.

For this implementation they used 13 G-3000H wireless access points to cover the public areas and five ES-2024PWR switches to manage the wired connectivity into each of the 125 bedrooms.

With 110 rooms, Marks Tey Hotel is situated in Colchester which makes it a popular choice for business travellers using Stansted airport. This hotel opted for a totally wireless solution. Wireless covers the whole hotel via 11 G-3000H wireless access points. These are data connected and powered via an ES-2024PWR switch.

Finally, the smallest hotel in the group, with 73 rooms, is the Grade II listed Best Western Grosvenor Hotel in Stratford-Upon-Avon. This hotel uses 13 G-3000H wireless access points to support wireless coverage throughout the hotel. These are run using two ES2024 PWR switches. The hotel required more access points because it is an older building developed over a more sprawled site.

Reliable access - every day

During the first month of the implementation, the Langstone Hotel supported 358 Internet sessions, each from a different guest.

Paten Hotels is now able to support a much higher number of people accessing the Internet via their networks without worrying the network will fail.

"We've gone from a situation of receiving complaints about network problems more or less every day, to having a high rate of people using the systems successfully," said Smith.

"We're also in a situation where we not only trust the technology, but support is available at the end of the phone."

Although the hotel group benefits from a remote help centre there have only been a handful of support calls made to Hotel Broadband since the go-live in November, and they have not required any site visits.

The hotels are all extremely pleased with the technology that has been put in place and are even starting to think about the next phases.

