

MOBILIZE YOUR HOTEL

**ENHANCE GUEST SERVICES,
GUEST EXPERIENCE AND
CREATE NEW REVENUE STREAMS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technology within the hospitality industry is rapidly evolving, going from disparate vertical solutions like CATV, video surveillance, wired and wireless High Speed Internet Access (HSIA), and communications and to a converged Internet Protocol (IP) network. Today, many, if not all, of these services and applications are delivered over a converged IP infrastructure of Ethernet and Wireless LAN. This convergence significantly simplifies management, decreases cost and maintenance.

However, the real power of an IP network is the ability to integrate various services and functions together through applications, enabling new services that would not be imaginable previously. For instance, knowing when a guest has arrived, the guest name, their loyalty status and giving them a personalized greeting and experience changes how the guest feels and keeps them coming back. Hoteliers want to create a personalized guest experience, which serves each guest with their specific needs and likes, in turn resulting in more returned visits, greater brand loyalty and increased wallet share at each stay.

Hoteliers want to capitalize on the possibilities presented through technology and mobile applications used with social media and e-commerce. Services such as tiered levels of broadband access, guest engagement through their mobile devices, location-based services, and providing in-room entertainment capability rivaling what is now available in most homes. These services will allow properties to engage guests from the moment a room is booked, to when they first arrive at the front door, during their stay and all the way through checkout. In addition, the new services can make any property a more desirable destination for conferences and events by offering organizations flexibility to communicate in new and exciting ways with their attendees.

This paper will explore how hotels can leverage technology to provide services focused on delivering the ultimate guest experience.

EVER GROWING GUEST MOBILE DEVICES

Hoteliere are rapidly adapting to a new technological era to engage and accommodate their guests through their mobile devices. Hotel Executive reports that the average hotel guest is carrying 2.65 mobile devices (smartphone, tablet and laptop). Today's guests are extremely connected and expect to connect everywhere and anywhere. As the popularity of mobile devices increased, hoteliers have experienced revenue decline with in-room telephone and television services, giving way to unlimited cell phone plans and internet video services such as Netflix and Slingbox. However, hoteliers see an opportunity to be more connected with

their guest in a personalized way, engaging the guest through their mobile device and delivering services tuned to the guest needs; improving guest experience and in turn, increase wallet share, returned stays and guest loyalty.

Success of this strategy depends on the enabling Wireless LAN infrastructure to provide pervasive coverage, capacity, and quality of service, that meet the expectations of the guest, the demands of the new service applications and security protection of both guests and hotel transactions.

MANAGING HOSPITALITY HSIA THROUGH TIERED SERVICES

A 2011 NY Times article highlighted that home Internet providers, such as Comcast and Verizon, are adopting pricing tiers for their customers, which establishes an expectation for consumers to pay according to individual broadband performance and usage. This premise is confirmed with a 2010 YPartnership iTraveler study that found four out of ten iTravellers would agree to variable pricing based on Internet speed and usage.

Until now, Wi-Fi access in hotels has been a one size fits all offering, leaving money on the table. As hotels refresh their networks for increased coverage and capacity, there is an opportunity for the hotel to offer tiered broadband wireless services. This tiered offering could be rate limited by tier, providing limited email and browsing for free/casual users, and charging extra for the heavy users and offer better performance to loyalty customers. Continually adding bandwidth to meet the exponential growth of mobile device can be a costly proposition. Instead, by establishing tiered broadband access and passing those costs to the guest, a hospitality property can manage the need for broadband upgrades and meet guest expectations for high-speed connectivity.

Examples of tiered system of HSIA for hotel guests:

- A gold level membership in the hotel loyalty program provides the member with the higher-level tier and bandwidth. For no additional charge, the member has internet access, can check their email, participate in webinars, use video conferencing in the room, and download and watch videos.
- A business traveler who does not belong to the hotel loyalty program has business uses, for video conferencing and other high demanding high bandwidth usage. The hotel charges this guest a premium price for this level of broadband access. It could also encourage the guest to join the loyalty program and return for more stays to achieve free access.
- The average family traveler may only need to surf the internet, check email, access Facebook and do some shopping online. This basic Wi-Fi access is included in the rate charged for the room.

IMPROVING GUEST EXPERIENCE WITH LOCATION-BASED SERVICES (LBS)

The good news is that guests want to be connected with their mobile devices all the time and wherever they are. By leveraging the hotel's Wi-Fi network, hoteliers have the ability to connect with the guest, understand where they are, such as front lobby, near the lounge, or poolside, and proactively offer them services tuned to their personal preferences. Through the deployment of location-based mobile applications and business analytics, hotels can not only respond to a guest inquiry but anticipate interactions with restaurants, shops, room service, housekeeping and exercise and spa facilities based on past guest preferences and purchases at the hotel properties.

The hotel property WLAN can be enabled with proximity location-based services (LBS) software with business intelligence that enables it to communicate with guest smartphones through the brand loyalty application. Through a historical collection of the guest's previous stays, the hotel develops a consumer profile based on guests past purchases and service preferences. They use this information to improve the guest experience.

Consider the following scenarios:

- A gold card guest drives up to the hotel. When they get out of the car, the hotel Wi-Fi connects with the guest's smartphone, identifies the guest and sends them a personalized welcome note from the manager, along with an invitation to a special members-only reception.
- If the guest phone has NFC (Near Field Communications), the system sends the guest their room number and enabling code to unlock the room door using NFC technology.
- As the guest is nearing one of the restaurants, the Food and Beverage manager sends a notice of available reservations in the hotel dining room with a complementary drink offer. The notice includes video links to the chef describing and demonstrating preparation of the specials offered each evening.
- A guest calls housekeeping for additional towels and housekeeping locates the closest housekeeper associate to deliver the towel improving response time.

UNTETHERING IPTV

These days, guests expect not only the latest technology when it comes to in-room entertainment—High Definition television (HD), and Video-On-Demand (VOD)—they also want the ability to connect to the Internet through Wi-Fi in order to view streamed Over The Top (OTT) content. Guests want to connect with their services such as Netflix, Hulu, and Slingbox, on their own mobile devices, however they would like to use the in-room television for display. Using technology such as Miracast would allow a guest to direct the content from their device to the television in the room.

IPTV allows hotels to create completely personalized and interactive entertainment experiences for guests that include High Definition broadcast of live television,

premium, and Video-On-Demand channels. When used in conjunction with tiered-level broadband access, guests could also download OTT and gaming content streaming off the Internet.

However, today's entertainment options are "tethered" to the in-room television screen or at specific locations throughout the facility. By restricting VOD and premium broadcast channel content to only the in-room screen, properties are missing an opportunity to capitalize on the guest using their mobile devices to view video content 'on the go'. By "untethering" the entertainment content from the TV screen and mobilizing it over its Wi-Fi network, a new world of entertainment options emerges.

- OTT users and video gamers select a premium access plan for increased bandwidth and to direct content from their mobile device to the in-room television.
- A gold level member is able to DVR a football game at the hotel while travelling to the hotel for no additional charge and watch the game when they arrives at the hotel in their room or on their mobile device.
- With premium access, a hotel guest can direct any show they were watching in their room to their mobile device, taking it with them anywhere in the facility to continue watching the program.

CONCLUSION

Hospitality is in an exciting time of transition. The ability to engage and interact with the guest has never been greater. More than just a loyalty card, hoteliers can connect with guests through their mobile devices and gain a greater understanding of guest preferences, which will enable personalized services for improved guest experience and satisfaction, while opening new sources of revenue.

Creating tiered levels of Wi-Fi access to broadband based upon loyalty program levels or usage gives guests the ability to choose the amount of bandwidth they desire for the application and services that interest them. Hotels can deploy mobile applications to enhance the guest experience through innovative e-commerce practices that cater to a guest's every

need and allow real-time interaction with restaurants, shops, room service, housekeeping and exercise and spa facilities. Untethering the IPTV system maximizes the entertainment potential that hotels can offer their guests, providing an experience that meets or exceeds what they've come to expect from their home entertainment systems and new opportunities to produce revenue through Video-On-Demand and broadband usage fees.

For hoteliers, it is all about brand and guest experience. The transition to IP networks along with the pervasive use of mobile devices, enables a new generation of hospitality applications that can improve guest experience while distinguishing brands and creating new sources of revenue.