Wi-Fi for Hotels & Hospitality

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Every Hotel Needs Seamless, Reliable, Fast Wi-Fi

OVERVIEW

Just how important is Wi-Fi to a hotel’s brand and bottom line? Nearly half of travelers won’t stay at one that doesn’t offer free, in-room Wi-Fi. Another 11 percent are willing to pay extra for super-fast Wi-Fi.

That’s according to a December 2015 TripAdvisor survey of more than 44,000 travelers and hoteliers. Another survey, by hotels.com, found much the same: Wi-Fi ranked as the No. 1 amenity that business and leisure travelers look for when comparing hotels.

Of course, none of this is news to hoteliers who understand the relationship between their wireless LAN (WLAN), their brand reputation and their bottom line. But here’s the surprise: A WLAN deployed just a few years ago often lacks the features necessary to deliver the experience that guests, event organizers and other customers expect today.

Read on to learn:

• Which three trends are prompting hoteliers to upgrade their WLANs, and how those upgrades directly benefit their brand and bottom line.

• What event organizers frequently look for when deciding whether a hotel’s WLAN is capable of delivering great attendee, presenter and exhibitor experiences.

• How Samsung Wi-Fi products meet the unique requirements and challenges of hotels, including upscale properties such as Manhattan’s Le Parker Meridien.

• Why Samsung is the ideal partner for hoteliers that want a comprehensive, turnkey package of Wi-Fi infrastructure, electronics, mobile devices, and audio-video (AV) equipment such as digital signage and video security/surveillance.
Travelers’ overwhelming preference for hotels with fast or free Wi-Fi isn’t a new phenomenon. For example, a 2012 hotels.com survey found that free Wi-Fi was a must-have. So what’s changed since then? At least three trends are prompting hotel owners and operators to upgrade their wireless LANs:

- **Each guest room has more Wi-Fi devices than ever.** Whether it’s a lone business traveler with a smartphone and laptop, or a family of four where everyone has a tablet, the number of devices using Wi-Fi simultaneously has skyrocketed. That trend means more devices competing not only for bandwidth, but also for the scarce number of available channels, especially at 2.4 GHz.

- **Guests are using much more bandwidth-intensive applications.** Video is a prime example: HD streaming services such as Netflix and HD videoconferencing services such as Skype for Business.

- **Wi-Fi roaming services are increasingly scrutinizing quality of service (QoS).** Wi-Fi roaming providers are monitoring the QoS of the networks they offer to their customers and to the customers of the resale partners, such as mobile operators. If a Wi-Fi network doesn’t meet benchmarks for speeds, latency and other QoS metrics, roaming providers will move it down their list of available hotspots—or drop it altogether.

Those and other trends highlight why a WLAN deployed even just a few years ago often lacks the QoS mechanisms, management tools and other features that are must-haves to provide the kind of user experience guests demand. When it doesn’t, the hotel’s brand and bottom line can suffer in multiple ways, including:

- Negative reviews on social media, which influence not only consumers and business travelers, but also event organizers and other people responsible for choosing hotels.

- Less revenue when guests go to a nearby café to use its hotspot instead of paying for the hotel’s premium Wi-Fi service.

- People checking in become disgruntled when the front desk is swamped playing help desk for guests complaining that the Wi-Fi is slow.

- Hotels near major convention centers risk losing international business travelers, who rely on Wi-Fi as an alternative to expensive cellular data roaming.

- Internal and guest-facing services that require fast, seamless, reliable Wi-Fi can’t deliver their respective productivity benefits and market-differentiating experiences, thus undermining the return on the investments.

“At any given time, we have 800-1,400 devices running on our network,” says John Yu, Director of Management Systems for Le Parker Meridien, a four-star hotel in New York City that recently upgraded its WLAN. “During peak evening hours, we typically have up to 2,000 devices connected to the network simultaneously. Families come in and every kid has their own iPad. That’s a lot of different devices and a lot of connections.”
Events increasingly rely on cloud-based content and services. Businesses of every size use the cloud, and they don’t stop using it when they’re at events. Organizers, presenters and exhibitors can’t download their booth presentations, stream their keynote videos or process credit card transactions at registration kiosks without fast, seamless Wi-Fi.

Wi-Fi enables the interactivity that organizers see as key to a great event. Many organizers create mobile apps, Twitter hashtags and live polls to encourage attendees to share their experiences—not just with presenters and other attendees, but also with people who aren’t there and might decide to attend next time after seeing everything they’re missing. The time and money spent to develop those engagement offerings is squandered if they’re underused because attendees are frustrated by lousy Wi-Fi.

Attendees carry multiple Wi-Fi devices. The typical attendee brings at least a smartphone, and one-third also carry a laptop or tablet. They often use multiple devices simultaneously, such as checking email on their laptop during a keynote while tweeting about it on their smartphone. Today’s WLANs have to be able to keep up with a growing number of devices per user—including emerging types such as wearables.

WHAT DO PROFESSIONAL EVENT MANAGERS EXPECT?

“Lightning Speed! Free, fast, and it better be reliable — highly effective Wi-Fi is the #1 issue for planning professionals and conferees in the meetings business today. Conferees often come with up to three wireless devices per attendee so greater bandwidth is a necessity to drive multiple devices. Planners are expecting adequate bandwidth to keep meeting guests not only connected and engaged, but happy as well.”

Source - Benchmark Hospitality International
Key Samsung Differences

What exactly makes a Wi-Fi solution capable of meeting hospitality’s unique requirements? For starters, speeds that wow guests and coverage that blankets the entire property, including outdoor areas such as pools. In independent tests, Samsung’s 802.11ac solution provided 30 percent better coverage and 40 percent more data throughput than competing systems. Here’s how Samsung Wi-Fi products provide those benefits and more:

1. **Self Organizing Networks (SON) and Intelligent Beam Selectable Antenna (IBSA)**. These two technologies neutralize concrete walls, steel beams and other common architectural features that undermine coverage. SON automatically optimizes access point (AP) configurations and coverage to meet each venue’s unique requirements and layout – an approach that also significantly reduces the cost and time of designing a WLAN. Meanwhile, IBSA uses 15 antennas in each AP to minimize dead zones, extend service coverage and achieve a receiving sensitivity 2 dB higher than competing APs.

2. **Voice Aware Traffic Scheduling (VaTS)**. This patented technology efficiently sends voice frames to multiple devices using traffic scheduling techniques that Samsung perfected over decades of serving mobile operators. As a result, VaTS ensures that voice quality never degrades as the number of concurrent calls increases.

3. **AirMove**. In traditional Wi-Fi handoffs, the user’s device scans for APs and connects to the appropriate AP when the signal drops below a certain threshold. This approach requires a long scan time and degrades service quality. AirMove uses LTE cellular handover techniques, enabling the AP controller to determine the ideal time to hand off and the right AP to use. As a result, Samsung users enjoy seamless service during voice calls and video, and twice the throughput that competing WLAN solutions can provide during handoffs.

4. **Built in Security**. Samsung APs feature a dedicated security RF monitoring chip embedded independently of the RF service chip for continuous realtime monitoring. This approach reduces the amount of standalone security equipment, helping keep the total WLAN system cost within budget.

5. **Forward Thinking Architecture**. Samsung Wi-Fi solutions such as the Series 400 APs are designed to accommodate emerging applications and requirements, including the Internet of Things (IoT). This flexibility extends the WLAN’s service life and enables schools to take advantage of new applications and devices to further increase learning, faculty and staff productivity, energy efficiency and safety.

6. **AirEqualizer**. This traffic scheduling technology optimizes Wi-Fi service by allocating equal airtime to multiple devices, so all simultaneously connected users get the resources they need. AirEqualizer also can maximize the AP’s total cell throughput by more than 50 percent compared to competitors’ products by adapting to the Wi-Fi standard (a/b/g/n/ac) in use and by the signal intensity characteristics.

Samsung’s relationships with mobile operators, as well as its work with cellular and Wi-Fi standards bodies, gives it unique insights into how wireless technologies, devices and applications will evolve over the next decade. This vision enables Samsung to design its Wi-Fi solutions to accommodate many of those changes. That flexible, forward-thinking architecture helps school districts extend the life of their WLAN investment and quickly, costeffectively capitalize on emerging trends.

1. Available with access points deployments with controller only
2. Availability depends on smartphone model
Many vendors offer WLAN products. Only Samsung can provide best in class Wi-Fi infrastructure and an extensive portfolio of other devices—including tablets Chromebooks, smartphones, interactive whiteboards, digital signage, and security/surveillance equipment—designed to meet the unique needs of the hospitality industry. Some examples:

- **Digital signage.** Digital signage can interface with multiple data sources to greatly enhance the guest experience at hotels while boosting the bottom line for the business. Samsung’s portfolio of digital signage includes models with resolutions up to 4K, touch screens, embedded media players and built-in Wi-Fi.

- **Wired and mobile phone systems.** Samsung offers a broad, deep selection of desk phones, smartphones, switches and other telephony products. The Samsung OfficeServ 7400, for example, makes it easy for staff to move calls between desk phones and smartphones, so they’re always reachable throughout the hotel.

- **Video surveillance.** Samsung’s surveillance portfolio includes pan-tilt-zoom (PTZ) and fixed cameras for indoor and outdoor use, as well as controllers and support infrastructure such as switched and PoE injectors. A high-quality WLAN provides the flexibility to relocate cameras, such as when a large event requires augmenting a hotel’s existing surveillance system.

- **Document management solutions.** Samsung’s printers, copiers and multifunction devices are designed for all of the ways that students, faculty and staff exchange documents, including PDFs and JPG. Simplified workflows and other features enable Samsung document solutions to typically have a total cost of ownership that’s 10 to 30 percent lower than alternatives.

Le Parker Meridien is an example of how many hotels see the value of going with a single provider—and choosing Samsung when they do. The 41-floor property, which features 729 guest rooms and 12 meeting rooms, recently upgraded with an all-Samsung line-up, including 412i APs hosted by a central WEC8500 WLAN controller.

“We used to have difficulty providing a quality network experience when we hosted gaming or movie companies because of their VPN, static IP, speed and coverage needs,” Yu says. “But our new APs are robust enough to take care of these issues.”

Le Parker Meridien also chose Samsung for its ability to provide the hotel’s IT team with white-glove tech support, as well as timely patches and upgrades to maximize the WLAN’s security and capabilities. The hotel’s One Samsung suite includes Samsung TVs in every guest room.

“Our entire IT team uses Samsung phones, too, and we’re really happy with them,” Yu says. “But we didn’t pick Samsung out of brand loyalty. In the end, we picked Samsung because it delivered.”

How does your WLAN stack up?