AMARA SIGNATURE SHANGHAI
Amara Group Selects Ruckus High-Performance Network Infrastructure for First Hotel in China

OVERVIEW

Only a 10-minute drive to the Jing'an business and shopping district in West Shanghai, the Amara Signature Shanghai is a prestigious 5-star hotel sporting a capacity of 343 guest rooms and suites. The hotel offers a blend of the city's rich heritage as a culinary destination, modern amenities, and superior service. An adjoining office and retail space provides guests with easy access to a myriad of brands in food and beverage, entertainment, and lifestyle retail.

REQUIREMENTS

- Fast, secure connections to meet the expectations of guests and clientele
- Simplify network setup and management, increase security, and minimize troubleshooting, as well as being able to accommodate future upgrades
- Reliable Wi-Fi access to hotel services without interruption or hassle
- Strong and stable wireless connectivity to support multiple applications
- High-density Wi-Fi support for high-traffic venues such as restaurants and meeting rooms

SOLUTION

- A wide range of Ruckus Networks hardware, including Ruckus indoor access points (APs), outdoor APs, as well as ICX switches, were deployed in different areas of the hotel for secure and reliable access

BENEFITS

- Achieved not only gigabit-per-second data transmission speeds, but also powerful and stable network performance for both hotel staff and guests
- Ensured excellent and reliable throughput for the most demanding service requirements, including streaming video, unified communications and VDI, as well as high bandwidth mobile applications
- Expanded network coverage, and reduced interference, while providing reliable and fast data transfer rates in a constantly busy environment
- A unified and reliable network infrastructure that reliably supports all business applications without interruption

BETTER HOTEL WI-FI FOR HIGHER GUEST SATISFACTION

According to the Chinese Tourist and Hospitality Industry Association, by the first half of 2017, there were 848 five-star hotels in China, 72 of which were in Shanghai[1]. With growing industry competition, it is critical for high-end hotel brands to develop and strengthen their core competencies and be able to compete in the future.

Amara Signature Shanghai operates under the Amara Group based out of Singapore, which mainly engages in hotel investment and management in Asia, as well as a number of specialty dining establishments. The Amara vision is to be recognized as the leading Asian integrated lifestyle group. Sharing this common vision as the first Amara hotel in China, Amara Signature Shanghai strives to deliver first-class service and a five-star experience to all customers.

In the hospitality sector, Wi-Fi for guests is no longer a luxury but a necessity. Better network connections help the hotel to attract more guests and improve their offerings in a competitive market.

THE CHALLENGE

The Amara Signature Shanghai is positioned to attract both middle- and high-end businesspeople, who have higher expectations on connectivity versus regular tourists. These users expect high-speed and seamless connectivity, even while on-the-go. They may need to access e-mails anywhere, communicate through messaging apps, and attend video conferences.

At the same time, tourists and other hotel guests are expecting reliable connectivity that lets them watch online videos, interact with social media apps, and listen to the latest webcasts over their mobile devices, for example.

Hotels that fail to deliver quality network services also face negative comments and customer reviews, through popular travel-related online communities and forums.

The ability to cope with additional client density and frequent RF interference was a key requirement around the quality of network access. Outside of guest rooms, other hotel areas that feature high guest density, such as restaurants and conference rooms, usually require higher network capacity and performance. Wireless devices are commonplace, and guests often bring several devices along during their stay; these may include devices like smartphones, tablets, and laptops.

[1] Five-Star Tourist Hotel Directory, June 2017, the Chinese Tourist and Hospitality Industry Association.
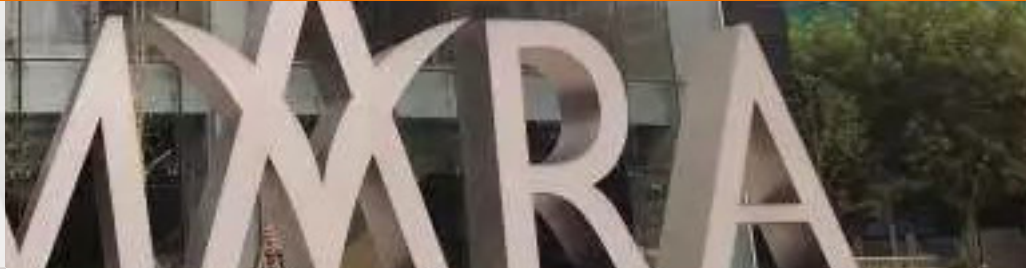
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CASE STUDY

"For the IT department, the rate of complaints received from customers is the most important index used in measuring performance. We selected Ruckus Networks not only for its reputation in the hospitality industry, but also the high-quality wired and wireless network connection technology that will continue to serve us well in the long run."

RONNIE WU
IT Director, Amara Signature Shanghai

Network interference impacting network reliability and performance for hotel guests was also a concern, as the shopping center adjacent to the hotel had a number of retailers who also owned and operated Wi-Fi access points (APs) from their individual stores.

In addition, while ensuring the best online experience for hotel guests, the hotel's internal management network required reliability and stability to better serve the needs of both incoming and outgoing customers. For example, a number of mobile terminals are arranged in the lobby area for customers to complete their check-in or check-out processes; a simple but crucial part of the guest experience that requires a high level of network stability and speed.

"When picking a hotel, speedy Wi-Fi and ease of network access is one of the most important factors for guests checking into a five-star hotel," said William Ho, Senior Vice President, Sales, Asia Pacific, ARRIS. "Therefore, developing a high-performance network infrastructure has become a critical and urgent task for hotel CIOs and IT departments to solve."

THE SOLUTION

Ruckus, along with its on-site deployment partner InterTouch, evaluated the features and needs in different areas of the hotel, eventually recommending a range of products, including the Ruckus H500, R700, and R500 indoor APs, as well as T300 and P300 outdoor APs for secure and reliable access.

The deployment covered all 343 rooms, as well as foyers, elevators, restaurants, gymnasium, swimming pool, and other public areas—together totalling around 20,000 square metres of floor space.

Ruckus ICX 7450 and ICX 6430 switches were used to allow flexible scalability and to simplify network set-up and management. The low-latency, non-blocking architecture ensured excellent throughput for the most demanding video, Unified Communications, Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), and mobile applications. The combination and configuration of Ruckus ICX switches and Wi-Fi APs can deliver gigabit per second data transmission with powerful performance and a stable network connection. At the same time, the overall setup was designed to minimize future troubleshooting, as well as to allow for convenient future upgrades.

The Ruckus R700 proved to be the perfect combination of performance and affordability for high-density environments such as the hotel's restaurant and conference rooms, delivering the industry's best price/performance of any three-stream 802.11ac AP. With Ruckus patented BeamFlex+ adaptive antenna technology, the R700 also enabled expanded network coverage, while relieving interference and providing reliable, fast data transfer rates in a busy environment.
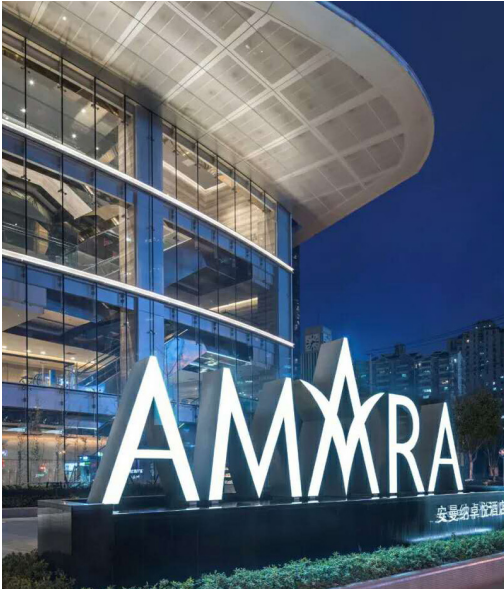
Separately, Ruckus and InterTouch designed a parallel network solution for use by the hotel management team. The individual networks for customers and hotel management were designed to be separate to ensure high levels of security.

"Ruckus Networks is able to deliver a high speed, high performance and interference free network solution," said Stephen Li, project manager of InterTouch. "The company's integrated product portfolio allows us to provide a high-performance network access infrastructure for our customers. This helps optimize performance, simplifies network management, and saves time as well as cost. We would recommend Ruckus Networks to all our customers."

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CASE STUDY

THE BENEFITS

The combination of Ruckus ICX switches and Ruckus smart Wi-Fi APs delivered a complete Multi-Gigabit 802.11ac Wave 2 solution, which optimized overall network access performance, and solved issues due to increasing equipment density, as well as growing bandwidth requirements over time.

Over 5000 devices simultaneously connect to the Amara Signature Shanghai's Wi-Fi network every day; the unified and reliable network infrastructure supported all the required business applications without any interruption.

Ruckus BeamFlex+ adaptive antenna technology also played an important role in alleviating the network interference experienced from Wi-Fi networks from the nearby shopping mall, automatically adjusting the signals to the best performing path, and steering around interference and obstacles. This ensured the strongest signal, highest throughput and the least amount of interference from the hotel Wi-Fi network for the benefit of guests and staff.

All in all, Ruckus Networks' complete access portfolio optimized the end-user experience, all the way from network construction and implementation, to day-to-day management for the IT department.

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