



Hotel Case Study

At a Glance

The Sutton Place Hotel is located in Newport Beach in Southern California. The surrounding areas are headquarters to many leading technology companies and distinguished universities. The hotel has 435 guest rooms, 20,000 sq. ft. of ballrooms and meeting space, a picturesque atrium restaurant, and a beautiful poolside terrace for people to relax and have informal meetings. The Sutton Place Hotel is a preferred destination for many business travelers and tourists alike.

Sutton Place Hotel Offers Wireless, High-Speed Internet Access Based on Pronto's Hotspot Managed Services

THE CHALLENGE

Managers at the Sutton Place Hotel were seeking ways to enhance their business traveler services with the goal of increasing occupancy rates and rentals of their expansive meetings and ballroom facilities.

Sutton Place was aware of the myriad benefits from broadband access, especially in guest rooms. Yet given the current economic climate, the solution needed to be cost effective for a hotel-wide rollout compared to using traditional wired approaches. Furthermore, Sutton Place required the ability to establish guest prices at their discretion, with plans available for VIPs, long-term guests, short-term guests, and corporate day users who would be accessing the wireless network only in conference rooms and public spaces.

The hotel also wanted to leverage the wireless service in their marketing efforts to encourage new guests to choose their property due to the presence of their business-friendly broadband services. Finally, management wanted to be 'forward thinking,' using a technology which had the potential for widespread appeal and which would put them at the forefront of guest services.

THE SOLUTION

Pronto's public WLAN solution served as a vital component in meeting these challenges. The solution covered all 435 guest rooms, public areas and meeting space of the hotel, using fewer than 20 access points, only 5 Cat5 long-run connections, and two Pronto Hotspot Controllers. The system provides guest room coverage through one Controller, and public areas and meeting space coverage through the second Controller. In the unlikely case of failure, either Controller can act as an emergency backup, as they are able to handle both the guest room and public areas simultaneously.

"Today, high speed Internet access in hotels is as essential as light and power. The Sutton Place Hotel is taking the initiative to make this business necessity available anytime, anywhere. The days of patch cords and plugins are over. Wireless connectivity and freedom of movement is in. If our guests are not wireless-enabled, we will gladly assist them by providing a wireless adapter to make their business trip more efficient."

Jean-Pierre Loral, General Manager of Sutton

Pronto public Wi-Fi solution has been viewed as a complete success for the Sutton Place Hotel, leading to increased revenue to the property, a reasonably priced, easy to use system for users, and an easily managed and maintained hot spot location for the service provider. The basic elements of the solution as they apply to the hotel include the following:

Turnkey Service

Users are given a flexible payment option of either direct credit card billing or prepaid cards. The prepaid cards are provided at the front desk and by the sales and catering staff for corporate events. The pre-paid cards are also available for VIP customers at no charge.

In addition to automated billing and support processes, Pronto's system provides valuable monitoring capabilities. As a result of the Hotspot Controller sending a heartbeat to Pronto's back-office system every ten seconds, the hotel's wireless Internet Service Provider (ISP) is made aware of any problem often before the end-user notices any disruption in service. The ISP is able to remotely diagnose the functionality of the access points using Pronto's system, greatly reducing the time to troubleshoot user problems.

Flexible Payment Options

Due to the pricing flexibility in Pronto's system, the hotel is able to provide various pricing options in different areas of the building, such as in the lobby, meeting rooms and guest rooms. Currently, the Sutton Place Hotel offers free access to Sutton Club members, \$8.95 daily access and \$19.95 monthly access.

Roaming

The hotel's need to market the service to new users was achieved through Pronto's relationships with large roaming partners Boingo, iPass, and GRIC. Corporate users belonging to these providers can gain Internet access at the hotel using their client software, providing increased marketing exposure for the hotel and additional revenue from the roaming partners.

THE RESULTS

Pronto Networks' public Wi-Fi solution successfully met all of Sutton Place Hotel's objectives and resulted in increased customer satisfaction, additional revenue for the hotel and service provider, and minimal ongoing overhead to maintain the network at the location.

Usage Levels

Within three months of installation, the monthly usage includes 85 day users, 45 free VIP users, and more than 60 monthly subscribers. This represents more than \$2000 in monthly revenue just from wireless Internet usage.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the presence of broadband can increase occupancy 1-3%. For a hotel this size with an average room rate of \$150, this represents an increase in monthly revenue of almost \$15,000 for each 1% increase in occupancy. The hotel was able to win some key deals to rent their ballroom space for corporate users who sought wireless connectivity.

User Benefits

Guests have been well served by an inexpensive and convenient means to gain wireless, high-speed Internet access in various areas of the hotel. Basic user questions were addressed through on-site marketing materials and simple logon procedures. Any additional problems were addressed by toll-free telephone support. Users were also provided several payment options from which to choose, including a monthly subscription for those spending extended periods of time at the hotel and a day rate plan for those staying for only short periods. Security of users' credit card and password information was provided through built-in use of secure servers, support of corporate VPNs, and an optional IPSec-based VPN.

Service Provider Benefits

Pronto's solution also provided several benefits to the wireless ISP serving the hotel. Installation of the Pronto Hotspot Controller was as easy as plugging it into a broadband router and standard power outlet. In less than five minutes the system came online and began offering service to customers.

Pronto's system also provides a portal for the ISP to monitor the network real-time and to track usage and revenue trends. The system provides immediate alerts in the rare occasion a network problem occurs.

Open, Flexible Platform

Pronto's public Wi-Fi solution is built on a flexible, standard-based platform, enabling the easy addition of new hospitality features. Pronto's platform also allows the ISP to integrate other technologies and services, providing additional benefits to hotel owners, guests and visitors.



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