

Viceroy Miami

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Jonathan Reynolds, Director of Technology, Viceroy Miami

Challenge

Luxury new-construction hotel needed to compete with nearby properties by providing free WiFi to guests

Management did not have the budget or the technical staff to manage and maintain a Cisco network

Viceroy required an extremely reliable high quality solution to meet the exacting demands of their high-end clientele

High-density, multi-story concrete and steel building

Results

Reliable, high speed WiFi is now available across the entire property

No additional customer support staff needed... network now managed by the hotel

Zero customer complaints since launch

The Viceroy now beats IT amenities of competing properties, giving them an edge in a tough economy



The Viceroy Miami on Biscayne Bay is South Beach's newest and most luxurious hotel property. With 162 rooms, a 28,000 square foot spa, celebrity chefs in its restaurants, an HD screening room, a floating bar, and the longest infinity pool in Florida, the Viceroy pulls out all the stops when it comes to amenities.

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Of course, they keep an eye on their competition. So when Jonathan Reynolds, the Viceroy's director of technology, discovered that their competitor across the street had slightly lower rates and free in-room WiFi, he decided he had to meet the challenge.

Connexion Technologies, a fiber-optic amenity and technology infrastructure company, was brought in by the project developer, The Related Group, to determine the best solution. The primary goal for the hotel was to deliver top-tier wireless to satisfy the very exacting demands of their hotel guests.

Connexion's director of wireless solutions, Jonathan Wrenn, fielded quotes from other vendors such as Cisco and Colubris, but found their solutions unwieldy, difficult to maintain, and prohibitively expensive. And then Wrenn checked out Meraki.

"I can think of four reasons why we picked Meraki: cost, ease of deployment, the Dashboard, and its coverage and penetration," said Wrenn. "Meraki's tagline should be 'WiFi simplified,'" he added.

For the installation, Wrenn says Meraki saves time, and therefore labor cost in deployment. He didn't need to bother with allocating IP addresses or programming each unit. "It took us five or six minutes per unit, and the network is "providing great coverage and great service," he says. "It's everything we need it to be. And you don't even have to configure them [the radios]; they go out and get their own configuration. That hugely reduces my time in the field."

That translates into long-term labor savings, said Reynolds. "It's the type of network that can be deployed by very low-tech staff. Cisco and Colubris require the type of staff you typically don't have on site. Meraki reduces our operating expenses long term."

The Dashboard is what really sold Reynolds on Meraki. "No one else offers this feature," he said. "It allows me to be proactive about WiFi issues instead of reactive. If a node goes down, it emails me and I can fix it even before a guest complains, which is key in the hotel business."

The network is also by nature more reliable, says Wrenn, because of the "self-healing" nature of the mesh technology Meraki uses. If a node goes down, the nearby units simply look for the next repeater to jump to. No outage, no problem.

Reynolds says he gets far more complaints about the in-room entertainment system than about WiFi now. "We haven't had any

complaints from any guests (about WiFi)," Reynolds says, "and our guests are very exacting, particularly about their Internet access."

In these economic times, Reynolds says reliable WiFi is a game-changer. As he watches the booking window (lead time in which reservations are made) shrink, he says he can tell that customers are searching for value. Meraki allows the Viceroy Miami to deliver just that.

