CASE STUDY

IHG TRANSFORM TOWARDS SMART HOTEL BY DEPLOYING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Cloud-based network architecture successfully enhance IHG's network infrastructure

Excellent network experience in the hotel determines whether guests choose to stay, and this also generates significant data traffic for the hotel. For IHG, it is imperative to upgrade the network infrastructure.

"From the moment a guest reserves the room, we begin to follow entire journey, including arrival, check-in and stay - it's only through the web, not phone calls or text messages, that we can link all these together." Said Joy Zhang, Senior Director, Products Deployment – Hotel&Owner Solutions, IHG Greater China.

ARUBA HELPS IHG MIGRATE THE NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE TO CLOUD

Leroy Zhang, Director, Global Hotel and Owners Solutions, IHG Greater China, said that the greatest advantage of Aruba is its high cost-effectiveness. Aruba offers the industry-leading cloud management technology and product performance with its competitive price; it is very attractive to the hospitality industry where overall return on investment is particularly critical.

Hence, as a leader of WLAN solutions worldwide, Aruba was chosen by IHG as a partner. Both parties cooperated to deploy cloud-based network architecture to enhance its network infrastructure support capabilities comprehensively.

ENTER THE NEW PHASE OF DIGITAL OPERATION

Aruba deployed Aruba Central - an integrated cloud management platform, Studio, IoT devices and smart guest room application in IHG hotels to helping IHG enter new phase of digital operation.

REQUIREMENTS

- The hotel guest network should be high speed and stable.
- All of the network devices should be easily managed by cloud.
- It should be simple and convenient to operate and manage the network, and problems can be discovered and solved in a timely manner
- The entire network deployment should be very quick, network device configuration should be zero touch.
- Guest authentication experience should be same in all of the IHG hotels.
- Published API for customized development

SOLUTION

- Aruba Central
- IHG 39000 AP
- 2400*switches
- 7005-RW
- 7010-RW
- 7030-RW
- IAP-303H
- AP-303
- IAP-305
- IAP-315
- IAP-325
- IAP-365
- IAP-375
- 2930F switches
- 5406 switches

DRIVE THE DIGITALIZATION OF HOTEL OPERATION MANAGEMENT

IHG Connect is built on Aruba Central cloud management architecture. In addition to offering integrated management of all hotel network devices (APs, switches, SD-branches) and monitoring platform functions, it incorporates AI-enabled intelligent network fault analysis, big data analytics platform based on the client presence and centralized user authentication platform function. Moreover, it provides the business management advice to business owners based on big data analytics.

With the sales model of Aruba Central based on the subscription, upfront capital investment of the user is reduced. Rapid and automated deployment on the cloud also reduces the workload of technical staff during the network deployment. All these factors accelerate the network deployment, so new hotel can start the business as soon as possible during the network deployment, and the hotel renovation minimizes the impact on the business.

As stated by Zhang Fan, currently, IHG Connect has been deployed in 30% of over 500 IHG hotels opened in Greater China, and the remaining 70% are upgrading the infrastructure actively. Since 2018, IHG Connect has been adopted in all new hotels; according to the plan of IHG, by the end of 2023, IHG Connect will be deployed in all hotels of IHG in Greater China.

With the implementation of IHG Connect, IHG is building robust and secure network infrastructure, wireless network management cloud platform and hotel service management cloud platform.

DRIVE THE DIGITALIZATION OF GUEST SERVICES

As a model hotel of IHG Studio, InterContinental Chongqing Raffles City has deployed IHG Connect and Studio, so guests can access wireless network through multiple authentication methods including room number + last name, SMS and conference code.

When a guest enters the room, he can see personalized display of his name on TV, and he can also experience late check-out, consumption record view and food ordering service with this device.

"As the pioneer of first IHG-Studio hotel, we are moving ahead to pursue the leading network technology into our new hotel information system to improve our guest experience, our guest can use their smart phones connecting with Guest room TV, viewing Hotel information and accessing Hotel bill as well as ordering in-room dining and other guests services just in a single click, in the future our IHG Studio is easy to expand and control the devices from the temperature to the lighting in the room, we hope we can be the role model of leading smart hotel for IHG Group. We will work closely with our strategic partner – Aruba to make our IHG Studio project a truly success, Aruba Wi-Fi network and Central Cloud build the robust infrastructure to our Studio initiatives, and Aruba ESP framework is open and support multi-industry IoT protocols which means within this network, we can connect all the new emerging IoT devices and provide all the managing capabilities in the future, so we can transform those smart things from asset cost center to profit and customer service center, I look forward working with Aruba to pursue leading guest experience Hotel in the future."

Achim Brueckner

General Manager of Intercontinental Chongqing Raffles City

As Joy Zhang states, as a critical infrastructure platform, IHG Connect will link all digital applications of IHG, as well as current and upcoming devices related to smart rooms.

MIGRATE TOWARDS SMART HOTEL QUICKLY WITH IHG CONNECT

According to the plan of IHG, IHG will cooperate with Aruba deeply in the future to accelerate the rollout of IHG Connect to all hotels in Greater China.

Additionally, IoT terminals are ubiquitous in China. Based on this, IHG is exploring actively to build smart rooms suitable for hotels.

IHG is also looking for more value-added services based on the network infrastructure. For example, IHG is exploring to provide high-definition video conferencing service for guests based on IHG Connect as the business travel and large trade show formats keep changing.

Jason Xie, General Manager of Aruba China, stated that Aruba wireless network and Aruba Central provide solid infrastructures for IHG. Meanwhile, Aruba rolled out Aruba ESP, the industry's first AI-powered, cloud-native platform. Aruba ESP architecture features an open and cross-industry IoT agreement. Through the agreement, the smart products can connect to all cutting-edge products and provide comprehensive management capabilities in the future, to shift from "profit-oriented" to "customer service-oriented". Over 19 years, Aruba has been following the trend in networking era and insisting to offer customer-oriented innovation. As the network technology is constantly evolved in this digital world, Aruba would like to become an indispensable partner in enterprise's digital transformation journey.

Together, Aruba and IHG Connect will play a role as the underlying infrastructure to provide great and consistent stay experience for guests.

OUTCOMES

- IHG Connect is built on cloud management architecture of Aruba Central. It can provide unified management and monitoring of all network devices (APs, switches, SD-branches) to enhance centralized management, centralized intelligent operation and maintenance.
- It incorporates AI-based intelligent network fault analysis, big data analytics platform based on the client presence and centralized user authentication platform functions. It provides business operation advice to business owners based on big data analytics.
- With the sales model of Aruba Central based on the subscription, upfront capital investment of the hotel owner is reduced
- Rapid and automated deployment on the cloud also reduces the workload of technical staff during the network deployment.
- Aruba Central can be interfaced with various business platforms intelligently to provide more comfortable stay experience for guests with intelligent IoT terminals.

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