

## CASE STUDY

# ARUBA WLAN ENABLES BED, BREAKFAST AND BANDWIDTH AT CITYMAX HOTELS

Landmark Hospitality provides affluent guests with pervasive, secure connectivity at its Citymax Hotels by deploying an Aruba Wi-Fi with AirWave.



Seemingly overnight, guests of the Citymax Hotels went from appreciating Wi-Fi access to expecting high-performance mobility, leading Amit Kanchan to seek a modern enterprise wireless networking solution.

"Today, we summarize our customers' primary requirements with 'Three Bs' - Bed, Breakfast and Bandwidth," says Kanchan, Head of IT for the United Arab Emirates-based Landmark Hospitality, the parent of Citymax. "This meant adapting our business and focusing on our Wi-Fi offering."

As a hospitality brand dedicated to premium business services, Citymax attracts affluent, technology-savvy customers to its three properties that include a total of 1,300 rooms. "When guests enter our hotels, they want instant Wi-Fi connectivity," Kanchan says.

With its existing system unable to meet the coverage, density and performance demands of mobile device proliferation, Citymax determined a new solution was required to deliver pervasive connectivity. Further, the solution needed to provide remote management capabilities for efficiently operating an enterprise WLAN distributed across the cities of Al Barsha, Bur Dubai and Sharjah.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Pervasive Aruba Wi-Fi gives guests and staff seamless mobility throughout all facilities.
- Enables creating a tiered access structure for monetizing premium Wi-Fi connectivity.
- Enterprise WLAN optimization tool, Aruba AirWave, provides centralized network management for quality user experiences, network planning and fast troubleshooting.
- Smooth implementation ensures the deployment is non-disruptive to guests and meets tight rollout schedule.
- Enables future transition to mobilizing various corporate software applications and adopting Voice over Wi-Fi (VoWiFi) telephony.



**"Aruba delivered comprehensive coverage while utilizing as much of our existing infrastructure as possible, thus ensuring cost-effectiveness."**

**Amit Kanchan**

Head of IT for Landmark Hospitality

## SCALABLE ARUBA WLAN ENABLES RELIABLE AND SEAMLESS MOBILE EXPERIENCES

To address customer and operating requirements, Citymax wanted to provide guests with seamless mobility throughout each of its hotels. Citymax also desired a wireless infrastructure that it could build out as its needs evolved.

## International Portfolio Demonstrates Aruba's Advantages

After evaluating proposals from several leading WLAN vendors, Aruba Networks, an HP company, stood out. According to Kanchan, several high-profile projects in the Middle East and internationally demonstrated Aruba's ability to successfully meet the various Citymax needs.

## Efficient, Cost-Effective WLAN Design

Contributing to the decision was the superior WLAN design submitted by Aruba. It included a detailed heat map, which determined AP positioning for optimal coverage as well as a strategy for meeting Citymax's budget requirements.

"The design plan submitted by the Aruba team helped deliver comprehensive coverage while utilizing as much of our existing infrastructure as possible," Kanchan says. "This ensured cost-efficiency."

## Infrastructure for #GenMobile Connectivity

Supported by Aruba integration partner CADD Emirates, Citymax Hotels selected a Wi-Fi solution comprised of **Aruba APs** and **Mobility Controllers** along with **AirWave** for centrally managing the multivendor network and optimizing the guest Wi-Fi experience.

Together, these solutions represent fundamental elements of Aruba's secure, reliable and scalable enterprise mobility architecture. The infrastructure also enables Citymax to meet the needs of its #GenMobile guests and employees – the new breed of technology users defined by their strong mobility preference.

## AIRWAVE STREAMLINES MANAGEMENT WITH GRANULAR VISIBILITY

To ensure the overall health of its WLAN, Citymax leverages vendor-agnostic AirWave for critical and granular visibility into its entire wireless and wired infrastructure. This includes real-time and historical information based on user roles, device types, connection locations, application usage and time-of-day.

## Insights and Control Improve Network Operations and the Guest Experience

With AirWave, Citymax enjoys a map-like interface, which provides a centralized view of each AP and its location at every facility. This visualization includes the number of users connected to an AP and whether a connected device is a guest or hotel-issued equipment.



AirWave also reveals sources of RF signal interference. Like any hospitality organization, Citymax has a range of equipment on its properties that can cause such interference, from Bluetooth gear to microwave ovens. AirWave identifies RF obstacles and automatically moves mobile devices to a cleaner channel.

Such capabilities assist with diagnosing issues as well as planning for where APs are needed – or whether other steps should be taken – to maximize performance.

## VisualRF Helps Reduce Troubleshooting From Hours to Minutes

In addition, AirWave's VisualRF feature not only provides current and historical device information, but also reports on applications and their performance. As a result, problems that previously took hours to resolve can be done in minutes. This provides substantial savings through operational efficiency, reduced downtime and consolidated management toolsets.

## SMOOTH DEPLOYMENT CRITICAL TO SUCCESS

During the Citymax implementation, speed and unobtrusiveness were critical. The deployment was completed

in about a month, well before the Eid holiday, to accommodate an anticipated rise in demand for guest Wi-Fi connectivity. The non-disruptive installation proceeded while the hotel was fully operational.

"We were already operating near maximum capacity, which averages 94% occupancy over the year, and we could not afford to have guests unhappy," Kanchan says.

Without impacting guests, the Wi-Fi implementation was successfully completed by the agreed-upon deadline. Kanchan credits Aruba's flexibility with enabling fast, on-the-fly modifications to deployment maps in order assure optimal AP placement.

### PERVASIVE CONNECTIVITY DELIGHTS GUESTS, GENERATES REVENUE

Today, Citymax guests enjoy high-performance Wi-Fi throughout each hotel's premises, including elevators and parking facilities. "Travelers now expect Wi-Fi and demand a high quality of service, even when it's provided free of charge," says Kanchan.

#### Tiered System Enables Monetizing Wi-Fi Access

What's more, Citymax now offers two tiers of guest Wi-Fi connectivity. In addition to no-charge basic service, Aruba's technology enables the hotel to offer premium bandwidth for a nominal fee. This helps Citymax defray operating costs. "We're definitely monetizing our Wi-Fi," Kanchan says.

#### Security and Intelligence Add to Organizational Benefits

Citymax also appreciates Aruba security capabilities like wireless intrusion protection. And, due to the intelligence built into the Aruba infrastructure, Citymax gains sustainability advantages, including dynamic power management for saving electricity when no users are detected.

With Citymax delivering secure, seamless mobility across its sprawling properties, guests have indicated a high level of satisfaction.

“ We see Aruba’s solution as being a long-term investment ”

### ARUBA WLAN POWERS INNOVATION TO HANDLE LONG-TERM NEEDS

Moving forward, Citymax intends to leverage its Aruba infrastructure for a variety of innovations. These include support for operational applications and telephony.

"We intend to move on to the next stage, where we will run our administrative, staffing and guest-facing technologies over our WLAN," says Kanchan. "We also intend to use VoWiFi for our internal communications."

Overall, Kanchan says his organization views the Aruba infrastructure "as a long-term investment," and credits the new WLAN with making Citymax "a very contemporary, technology-enabled organization that is ready to welcome the guests of today and tomorrow."

### ABOUT ARUBA NETWORKS, AN HP COMPANY

Aruba Networks, an HP company, is a leading provider of next-generation network access solutions for the mobile enterprise. The company designs and delivers Mobility-Defined Networks that empower IT departments and #GenMobile, a new generation of tech-savvy users who rely on their mobile devices for every aspect of work and personal communication.

To create a mobility experience that #GenMobile and IT can rely upon, Aruba Mobility-Defined Networks automate infrastructure-wide performance optimization and trigger security actions that used to require manual IT intervention. The results are dramatically improved productivity and lower operational costs.

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