ZyXEL Powers Regents Inn Wireless Network

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Adam South, IT Manager, Regent Inns

Challenge

- Provide the platform for a converged network across the Regent Inns brands
- Guarantee bandwidth and Internet connectivity across all Regent Inns premises and offices
- Upgrade current disparate communications network as cost effectively as possible
- Reduce the cost of corporate and regional venue communications
- Continue to innovate, generate new revenue streams and increase service differentiation

Solution

- 100 x ZyXEL ES2024 24-Port Power over Ethernet L2 Fast Managed Ethernet Switches
- 100 x ZyXEL P660HW P660HW Wireless ADSL Routers
- Mitel IP telephony handsets (not provided by ZyXEL)

Benefits

- Provided Regent Inns with VPN management, hosted VoIP and customer WiFi to its 100 sites across the UK, including head office in Borehamwood and to all field-based staff
- The deployment of a simplified network infrastructure that simultaneously manages voice, data and entertainment services while massively reducing costs
- Head office and regional staff have complete geographic freedom for all communications to ensure a consistent degree of efficiency and functionality - whether working from home or any Regent site
- Customers at Regent Inn's 100 bars and restaurants can enjoy free WiFi
- IP connectivity allows Regent venues to offer a wide range of additional services to customers in the future, creating differentiating and leading to increased customer loyalty and revenues

About Regent Inns

Founded in 1977, today Regent Inns is one of the country's most dynamic pub and entertainment chains – constantly innovating to remain at the forefront of the industry. In the 1980s it launched the Old Orleans dinning chain. The next decade saw the creation of the unique Walkabout Australian themed bars and, in a joint venture with Jongleurs Comedy Clubs, extended the comedy brand's penetration from 3 to 20 towns and cities in the UK.

Today, Regent Inn's manages over 100 venues across the United Kingdom, is listed on the London Stock Exchange and remains committed to developing some of the most successful brands within the industry.

Cost Neutral Communications

Operating in a hugely competitive, low margin business, with an uncertain economic outlook ahead, the need for cost control is paramount for all businesses – but particularly those listed firms with shareholders and investors to please. It was this cost driver that initially encouraged Regent Inn to look to simplify and consolidate its network onto an IP platform aiming to drive down costs of its infrastructure while providing WiFi connectivity across its national network of venues, and increased flexibility for remote workers.

However, based on advice from leading communications service provider, SpiriTel, Regent Inn's ambitions took a leap when they realised the opportunities of a consolidated ZyXEL IP network.

The Group's communications network was a combination of disparate systems, implemented and serviced onsite by

multiple local vendors. The complexity of operations was considerable and the multiple support contracts meant costs were high.

Based on a detailed audit of its legacy environment and an indepth understanding of the goals and objectives of the company, SpiriTel was able to develop a business case that staggered Regent Inn - immediate return on investment!

Adam South, IT Manager at Regent Inn recalls:

" *SpiriTel was already supplying and supporting a number of our sites, so understood our business and submitted a proposal that would allow us to replace all our exiting communications kit - across our 100 sites - for less money than we were currently paying to support the existing systems. Plus, it was able to deploy a flexible enough environment that would allow us to offer a host of new services to customers as and when we wanted.* "

So, after an intensive tender process, against two of the UK's largest telecommunications providers, the SpiriTel/ZyXEL solution began roll-out in February 2008.

The culmination of the programme will make this Europe's largest ever multi-site hosted VoIP contract.

The ZyXEL Factor

According to Jon Singleton, Product Manager at SpiriTel, there was no doubt about the underlying switch/router technology to use.

" *We'd previously worked with ZyXEL's portfolio on a number of very successful projects in the past. In that time we had interrogated all the competing IP solutions on the market but none had the flexibility, performance and resilience to match ZyXEL. Significantly, the scale of the project meant that this would be a complex roll-out and we were confident ZyXEL would be there to support us at every stage.* "

Each of the 100 sites, including head office included a ZyXEL ES2024 Power over Ethernet (PoE) Switch, linked through to the ZyXEL P660HW Wireless ADSL Router for WiFi access, all working in combination with Mitel IP telephony handsets.

Jon Singleton, adds,

" *The ZyXEL ES2024 PWR Switch is flexible enough for the SMB market while providing the carrier grade security, reliability and network management capabilities that this particular complex solution demanded. While the beauty of the ZyXEL Wireless Router is its ability to deliver straightforward set-up and installation, whilst offering higher data transfer rates than conventional ADSL routers – and of course, robust security and content control.*

This latter point is crucial when offering access in a very public environment. Also, because of the likelihood of high usage, Quality of Service (QoS) was key, so the media bandwidth management functionality was a very significant differentiator. "

Reducing Costs

The new hosted solution will see the cost of supporting Regent Inn's nationwide infrastructure fall from its previous level; while the enhanced and streamlined communications processes with improve operational efficiencies.

Adam South, Regent Inns says:

" *From the very start, our goal was to minimise the costs of supporting our communications. However, we could have never believed that we'd be able to rip and replace our entire infrastructure, and start again with a state-of-the-art system... and still be in a position to eliminate costs.* "

The Platform for Revenue

Powered by the ZyXEL Ethernet Switch/Wireless ADSL router package, Regent Inn's new IP communications network is also proving to be the catalyst to build revenues, increase differentiation and deliver a host of connected new services across its nationwide chain of pubs and restaurants.

With guaranteed broadband access across its networks of pubs, Regent Inn can stream centrally managed content to its 100 plus venues – at the flick of a switch. This ensures Regent Inn can offer attractive advertising packages to entertainment providers, including drinks manufacturers and global entertainment brands – as a direct result of ZyXEL's fast Ethernet connectivity.

In another move, Regent Inn is currently trialling a virtual football competition between its Walkabout pubs in the North West of England. This would have impossible without the resilience and quality of service delivered by the ZyXEL backbone, and thanks to power and performance of the SpiriTel/ZyXEL network, the clientele of two pubs can battle, in real time, as their idols play out their own physical game on the pitch. It is exactly this kind of new service innovation that the team at SpiriTel sold as a concept during the tender process and sets the SpiriTel/ZyXEL solution apart from its competitors.

About SpiriTel

SpiriTel is a leading telecommunications business whose focus is the supply of a full range of traditional and emerging Internet Protocol (IP) based products and services to businesses. The company's voice and data product portfolio includes minutes, line rental, broadband, telephone system installation and maintenance, WiFi, VPN design and management and a full range of VoIP services. SpiriTel brings together proven and scalable products that deliver improved service, reduce costs and increase operational efficiency for over 1,000 SME and corporate clients throughout the UK and Ireland. For more information please visit www.spiritelplc.com

About ZyXEL

ZyXEL Communications UK Ltd is the UK subsidiary of a market leading end-to-end designer and manufacturer of xDSL, Security, VoIP, IP DSLAMS, Wireless, routing and IP switching equipment. The company offers comprehensive technical support and customer service to the ISP, Telco and IT distribution channel.

With headquarters located in Taiwan, ZyXEL maintains offices in the United States, Europe and Asia, ZyXEL has more than 2000 employees globally, with distributors in more than seventy countries, and products marketed in more than 150 countries on five continents. For more information please visit www.zyxel.co.uk