Fortinet and Fujitsu Deliver a Competitive Edge to Gisborne's Emerald Hotel

Providing robust, fast and comprehensive wireless connectivity is a requirement for leading hotels and conference venues across New Zealand. "Guests expect to be able to access the internet, their email and voice - wirelessly and seamlessly - as soon as they register," says Stuart Geddes, General Manager of the Quality Hotel Emerarld Gisborne, the area's premiere hotel and conference centre. "And that's what we can offer now, thanks to Fortinet and Fujitsu. Having wifi access to guest rooms, conference venues, the lobby and every corner of the property has given us a clear competitive edge when it comes to attracting conferences, events and, of course, guests."

Reliability Key to Success

To provide the necessary infrastructure to support the Emerald Hotel's wifi ambitions, the Fujitsu team chose Fortinet equipment. "When we install a wireless network," says Andy Memmott, Network Support Specialist at Fujitsu New Zealand's Gisborne office, "we have to be 100% confident that the solution will provide total satisfaction to the customer. That's why we selected Fortinet equipment for the Emerald Hotel installation. The FortiGate-80C UTM (Unified Threat Management) appliance is, feature for feature, the most reliable and cost-effective gateway on the market. And FortiAP-210B and FortiAP-220B indoor WLAN access points are optimised for commercial applications. When combined, we can take pride in knowing that we have provided the very best solution for our customers."

Challenges

- Maintain position as Gisborne's leading hotel and conference venue
- Enhance guest satisfaction
- Increase conference and event bookings

Objectives

- Install universal wifi coverage throughout facility
- Ensure robust and comprehensive operations
- Provide a platform for further growth

Deployment

- FortiAP
- FortiGate-80C
- Professional Services provided by Fujitsu New Zealand

Industry

Accommodation, Conferences, Events Hotel

"We have been working with Emerald Hotel for more than eight years," continues Memmott, "providing IT solutions to help them drive their business. In a local environment such as Gisborne, reputation is paramount. So when Stuart asked us about wireless, we had no hesitation what-so-ever in recommending Fortinet gear as the most appropriate hardware. We wanted to provide a solution that would be fast, functional, reliable and easy to maintain. That is exactly what Fortinet provides."

Upgrade Required

The Emerald Hotel was one of the first properties in Gisborne to provide guest access to the internet. "We had been providing wired internet access to rooms for years," says Geddes, "and had limited wifi in two first-level conference rooms. But, as they say, technology marches on, and we found more and more guests and conference organisers asking about universal wifi access. While we weren't losing any business - yet - we saw that we needed to upgrade our offerings if we wanted to maintain our position. So we invited our technology partner, Fujitsu, to recommend an upgrade path."

"Stuart's brief was quite straightforward," says Memmott. "He wanted wifi access all around the facility. The building itself is a solid concrete structure, built to last. They have a couple of conference rooms on the upper levels that needed powerful signals to penetrate the walls and floors. In addition, he wanted guests to be able to maintain a signal as they roamed throughout the building...from the lobby to the restaurant to their room and even in the car park."

"The hotel's owners, the Dorchester Pacific Group, had an internal IT team and we worked closely with them as we designed the solution," says Memmott. "Fortinet provided a complete site survey kit that we used to test the various signal strengths around the facility as we specified which APs would go where. We found that a centrally-located FortiAP-222B, along with nine additional FortiAP-210B APs and a single FortiAP220B, would provide the coverage we required and that the FortiGate-80C UTM appliance could easily handle the management tasks. We specified the solution, prepared the tender and Emerald / Dorchester approved the project."

Smooth Installation

"The installation went incredibly smoothly," says Geddes. "There was virtually no disruption at all to our guests. Andy and his team came in, hooked everything up and flicked the switch. Then, voila, the entire property was live. Promise made...promise kept. This is the level of service that we have come to expect from Andy and the Fujitsu team and it's the reason we continue to use them as our trusted IT partner."

The Emerald Hotel now offers wifi connectivity throughout the facility. "Having the upper-level conference rooms hooked up has given us an enhanced 'unique selling point' when it comes to booking conferences

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General Manager

Quality Hotel Emerald and Conference Centre

and events," says Geddes. "Conference wifi management is easy. We can allocate however many guest log-ins before the event. As the attendees check-in, we give them log-on details and passwords so they have immediate access. We can track usage for billing purposes, but by and large the actual bandwidth used is relatively modest. In fact, mostly business people use the wifi to talk to their families. But if they need to download massive amounts of data, we can accommodate them easily."

Impressive Results

Geddes is impressed with the results. "We had, in retrospect, rather modest requirements," he says. "It turns out that we have far more capabilities than we initially wanted. For instance, I can now move throughout the building with my laptop and stay connected to the hotel network without having to log-on. We'll be adding BYOD (bring your own device) functionality for staff in the future and the Fortinet gear will support it when we do. And we don't ever have to worry about security...the Fortinet gateway, combined with Fujitsu's management, ensures that our network is safe from intrusion or hackers."

"It is a competitive environment," concludes Geddes, "and having a robust and comprehensive wifi network across the facility means that we have firmly solidified our reputation as Gisborne's leading venue. The Fujitsu team and the Fortinet equipment have delivered exactly what we wanted and more. As a result we can now sell our conference and accommodation facilities with complete confidence."