



“ Greater visibility and a much easier way to manage the whole network...



Hotel guests expect fast reliable Wi-Fi as a matter of course and even the smallest of hotels offer guests free Wi-Fi.

Village Hotels planned to offer even more IP services such as allowing guests to access their own media content through internet TV services, smart fitness equipment in the gym and self-check in using tablets. And in the meetings and events areas, Village Hotels wanted to guarantee high-bandwidth secure wireless service as part of its conference packages.

However, the performance of the network varied across the hotel estate and in many properties the existing wireless network was ageing and wouldn't support the new plans. With the increasing use of mobile devices, the network was struggling to cope and complaints from guests were on the increase.

During 2014/2015, as part of a planned expansion programme, Village Hotels built new hotels in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow and asked its incumbent network infrastructure partner, MLR Networks, to install a Cisco Meraki cloud-managed wireless network in the new hotels.

The Cisco Meraki network worked so well in these properties that Village Hotels decided to roll-out the solution across all the properties.

CUSTOMER:
Village Hotels

OVERVIEW:

Village Hotels is a UK-wide chain of 28 hotels owned by KSL Capital Partners. The hotels are mainly located on the outskirts of large towns and cities within England, Wales and Scotland. Hotels are mid-sized and operate at the luxury/lifestyle end of the market.

SOLUTIONS:



- Cisco Meraki Access Points
- Cabling





"MLR Networks recommended Cisco Meraki as a solution which would support our plans for wireless in the hotels. Having one control dashboard covering the whole of the portfolio was key. We'd have greater visibility and a much easier way to manage the whole network".

Neil Cryer, Head of IT Operations and Projects at Village Hotels

PROOF OF CONCEPT

Performance and reliability were critical; Village Hotels had to be certain that they could guarantee the bandwidth available for meeting and events without impacting performance across the rest of the hotel. MLR Networks carried out a proof of concept study; a stringent process to test different access points with a range of devices at each individual property.

With this study, the Ekahau site surveying tools and MLR Networks' long-standing experience at each property, MLR Networks designed a wireless network which would guarantee the service required at each site. MLR Networks, working in collaboration with incumbent managed services provided, NetDef, put a plan in place to roll-out the Cisco Meraki network across all 25 hotels.

INSTALLATION

MLR Networks started the roll-out across all the properties in January with the entire estate completed by April. Prior to installation, NetDef configured each individual access point and network switch and set up the rules and policies required to control guest and corporate access. The entire project was managed by MLR Networks' project management team and was delivered on-time with minimum disruption at each property.

"The pre-project testing proved the solution would work and indeed the implementation went precisely as planned. We have achieved exactly what Village Hotels were hoping for. Customer experience has been greatly

improved, and there's no more complaints about the Wi-Fi. In fact, it has been such a success that we are now considering migrating more back-office services to the wireless network," Neil Cryer, Head of IT Operations and Projects at Village Hotels.

"We have worked with Village Hotels for many years so we were delighted to be involved in the project to deliver wireless across the whole estate. Feedback from the general managers at all the hotels has been great," Matthew Cox, Account Manager for Village Hotels, MLR Networks.

"Cisco Meraki wireless continues to be an integral part of the MLR Networks' portfolio. The flexibility and ease of management through the cloud-managed dashboard has been a real game changer. We're in an age where data retention and data analytics are key client requirements, particularly in markets like hospitality where user demographics and habits are of premium value. We have embraced Cisco Meraki as it allows us to create turnkey solutions to meet customers' demands," says Richard Leigh, Sales Director at MLR Networks.

About NetDef

NetDef is a leading managed service provider supporting a wide range of clients in the public and private sectors. NetDef works with medium to large customers across the UK delivering and managing highly secure IT infrastructure solutions. MLR Networks and NetDef have worked together in partnership with VUR and other customers for many years.