



Sandals Takes Vacation from Vanilla Wi-Fi with All 802.11n Indoor/Outdoor Smart Mesh Network

Considered one of the world's most luxurious resorts, Sandals was stuck. Each of their sprawling properties, over 20 scattered throughout the Caribbean, consumed huge amounts of beachside land with guests spending more time outside their rooms than in them, and looking for Wi-Fi.

Even though guests were on vacation, more and more were bringing handheld devices such as iPhones, Blackberrys, laptops, Sony PSPs and other Wi-Fi enabled gadgets to stay in touch.



Sandals Grande Ocho Rios Beach & Villa Resort, a 100-acre property, houses 8 restaurants and 12 bars, 7 outdoor pools, 93 semi-private pools, 4 tennis courts, 2 fitness centers, 2 self-contained spas, 22 whirlpools and 4 saunas.

Around the property, Sandals also wanted to use digital signs that informed guests about activities, events and services. They wanted use wireless for point-of-sale services as well as voice over IP so staff could easily stay in touch as they roamed about the resorts. Wi-Fi seemed to be the ideal solution.

Sandals had already sprinkled Wi-Fi access points in the main lobby and some guest rooms, but customers were complaining about dropped connections, slow speeds and spotty coverage. Meanwhile, there was no economical way to extend Wi-Fi to outdoor public areas, like gift shops, pools and patios, medical stations, bell desks, cabanas, fitness centers and spas.

"Charging guests \$13.99 a day for Wi-Fi service they could only get in a very limited area of a huge resort didn't help business," said Bobby Stewart, Treasury Director at Sandals. "Sandals built a reputation providing luxury services that are simply exceptional. Why should providing a world-class Wi-Fi service for our guests be any different? Our goal was to go the extra mile and build a very reliable and robust network that was a good value and give guests the kind of performance and convenience they were looking for."

Because the properties were so large and deployment would be time-consuming, Sandals wanted to install a network that would scale with respect to speed, capacity and user density. 802.11n was the technology of choice. And all-802.11n indoor/outdoor network needed to be manageable as a single WLAN from a central point. Outdoor access points needed to be deployed without the expense or disruption of pulling Ethernet cabling to each Wi-Fi node: so wireless 802.11n meshing was desired.

"We couldn't find a single vendor that could support all these requirements," said Stewart. "And the economics of deploying what we wanted in a piecemeal fashion was daunting. Then we found Ruckus."

After selecting Nomadix as their Internet gateway, Sandal's reseller introduced them to the Ruckus Wireless ZoneFlex system. "At first we just didn't believe the story. It was too good to be true:

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Headquartered in Montego Bay, Jamaica, Sandals Resorts International owns and operates 20 properties with over 5,000 guest rooms throughout the Caribbean that consume more than 750 acres of beachside. The Sandals family of luxury resorts includes the Sandals Resorts, Beaches Resorts and The Royal Plantation Collection.

REQUIREMENTS

- All-802.11n indoor/outdoor network
- Unified management
- Single point of administration
- Complete Wi-Fi coverage
- Consistent performance everywhere
- Access points without Ethernet cabling
- Simplified deployment
- Reliable support for streaming video, voice and data applications

SOLUTION

- 101 ZoneFlex 7942 802.11n Smart Mesh outdoor APs
- 82 ZoneFlex 7942 802.11n Smart Mesh indoor APs
- 13 ZoneDirector 1025 WLAN controllers
- 2 ZoneDirector 1050 WLAN controllers
- 3 ZoneDirector 1012 WLAN controllers

BENEFITS

- High-performance, all-802.11n indoor/outdoor wireless network
- Unified administration and management
- Extended signal coverage with fewer APs
- More reliable Wi-Fi connectivity
- Simplified management from a single console
- Ability to support video and voice



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