Hotel WiFi Design Guide Book
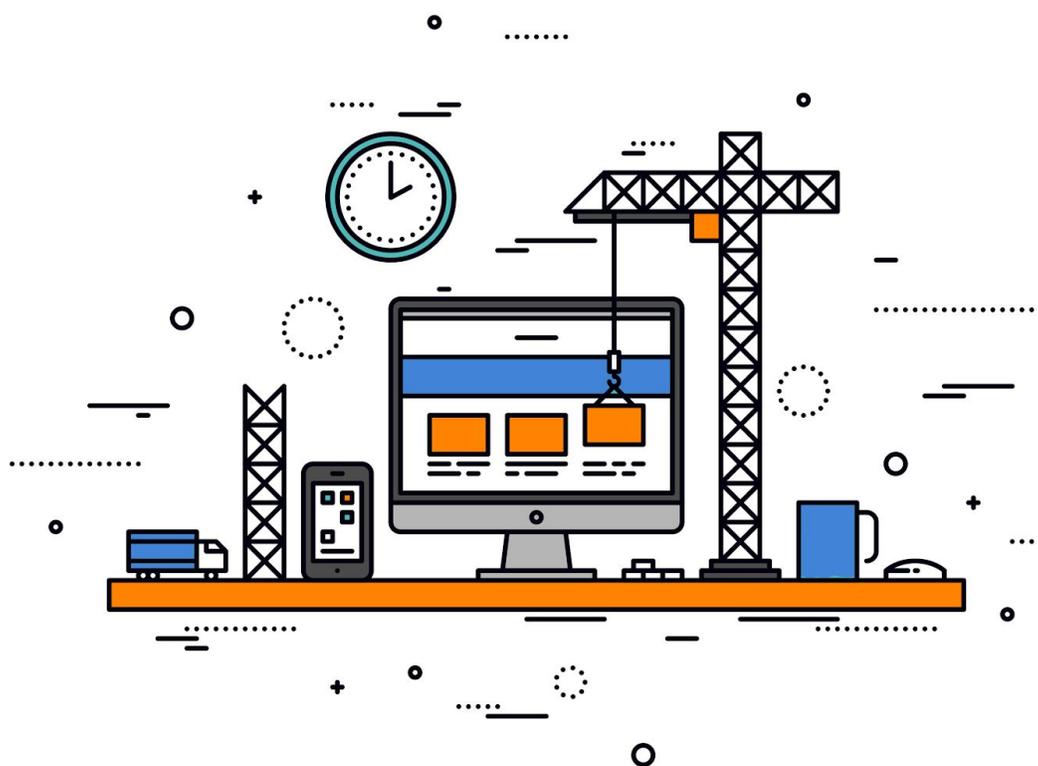
What's Inside:

Remember: It's for your guests

Remember this above all else, the whole reason you're investing in a fast, secure hotel wifi system is to **better serve your guests.**

You have to constantly be aware that your guests' and really of your end-users' requirements are driving your WiFi decisions.

Understanding exactly what factors are most critical to your guests when using wireless connectivity will help you to create a network that is designed to support those exact wants and needs.

So, before you deploy your new network, think to yourself, "How do my guests use WiFi, and what do they expect?

The common saying at SecurEdge is, above all else, the application drives the infrastructure.

Okay let's get into some of the details.

Design for Security First

There are two major challenges when it comes providing **secure wireless access** at hotels and resorts. First, how does your hotel secure devices that it doesn't own (BYOD) and two, how do you secure the amount of different types of devices?

Security today is not about controlling the devices themselves (unless you own them), it's about controlling the behavior of those devices.

Your security infrastructure needs the ability to control where your end-users can go on the network and what they can do.

At the minimum, your hotel will need:

- A **Firewall**
- Role-based access control
- Profiling
- IDS/IPS

Ultimately, security comes down to providing your end-users with everything they need, nothing more and nothing less.

Plan for Capacity

After security comes performance, and this means starting with planning for capacity.

You need to have a clear understanding of the different types and numbers of devices that will be accessing your hotel's wireless network.

Next, you will need to plan for what types of applications are being used, are end-users streaming video, using social apps, email, business applications like Salesforce, Skype?

Taking these factors into account during **the design phase** of your network will give you the context needed to deliver the right level of performance across your entire business.

Think About Access Point Placement

A long time ago, back in 2008, it was an acceptable practice to hang your access points in the hallway. Well, that was almost 10 years ago, and it's not anymore.

If your goal is high-performance, which it should be, then **placing your APs** down the hallways is the last thing you should do.

I know it seems easier to just throw a bunch of access points up and call it a day, however we're trying to do it right not what's easiest.

By placing your access points in the rooms you can use the hotel itself to help separate the RF. This also makes sense because where do most of your guests spend their time—in their rooms.

This will also help to lower co-channel interference and contention domains, creating higher data rates, meaning better performance and happier more productive guests.

Never Stop Monitoring Performance

Utilizing social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, and review sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor, your guests and even employees have never had an easier and more effective tool for unleashing their dissatisfaction.

Combined with increasing user expectations and you have a recipe for disaster if your wireless system doesn't always perform perfectly.

There's almost no room for error, and I can understand that point.

If WiFi is viewed as the same as electricity, then this makes sense. Would you find it acceptable if you checked into your room and found out that the power didn't work or that it only worked some of the time? No, I don't think you would.

To avoid bad reviews and spotty performance you need to measure performance on an on-going basis.

Your wireless system should incorporate a **network management system** and for many hotels some level of managed support to provide services like:

- Monthly health checks
- Firmware reviews

- Scheduled system tests
- Tier 2 support
- Proactive alerts
- Threshold based triggers
- And Client tracking to name a few

Once your Wi-Fi network has been deployed, things start to change. Even if you have the correct system in place wireless is still dynamic. The types of devices change, the number of devices might increase, the RF environment itself can change and that's why maintaining proper performance is a never-ending cycle of analysis and updates.

Keep Up With Demand

We all know that technology changes at a rapid pace. From new devices coming out, to how we use Wi-Fi, new technology is always right around the corner.

However, what most hotels probably don't know is that because of this rapid evolution of technology our wireless networks also must change over time to properly function.

It's not like buying a car, where after you've paid it off you're still left with a car that, although not the latest and greatest, still can get you from point A to point B more than comfortably.

No, with technology and specifically wireless, once the technology has evolved past a certain point older tech and systems start to breakdown.

At best your wireless system will last between 3-4 years, at which point it will need to be upgraded.

Wireless systems can be costly to deploy and maintain, so how do you consistently provide your guests with the best class of service year after year after year?
Utilizing a subscription, **WiFi as a Service** empowers hotels to afford the exact system they need to deliver the experience their guests demand.

WiFi as a Service offers many benefits, including:

- Affordable monthly payments
- Scalability to fit your needs up or down
- Guarantees you always have the latest technology deployed
- Enables you to reinvest capital towards other mission-critical projects

WiFi as a Service provides an effective answer to the question of how to keep up
and it simplifies networking, making it available to every business.

If you'd like to see how much it costs, check out our pricing page to compare packages and get started today.

Choose the Right Partner

Designing, deploying and managing large-scale, enterprise grade wireless networks is not an easy task. We've been doing it for over 10 years; spent countless amounts of time and money on the necessary certifications and still manage to **learn something new** every day.

One of those lessons is that wireless is a highly-specialized skill and many businesses get into trouble by thinking they can do it themselves or can find an inexpensive consultant to get the job done.

Unfortunately, even if your hotel can afford to develop an on-staff resource to the required level, they probably wouldn't be around for long because of how in-demand the position has become.

However, there's no way around it, wireless requires experience and skill to get it right. Which means finding the right partner is critical to your success.

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Many hotels are already utilizing robust and modern wireless networks to improve their own efficiency and most importantly to enhance their guest's experience.

For example:

- Automated guest check-in, check out and room selection.
- Mobile access to housekeeping, room service and guest services (even IT)
- Send guests live hotel related updates and promotions

Hospitality is driven by the customer, and they expect reliable, secure, and fast WiFi access. It's time to give them what they want and start supporting your guests expectations.

Want to know how your hotel's WiFi stacks up? Use the attached checklist to assess your current environment and identify your wireless needs.

Need some expert help? Give us a call! One of our wireless specialists can work with you to develop a wifi solution.

Wireless Network Design Worksheet

Project or challenge
Biggest Need – specific requirements:
Timeframe:
Floor Plans:
Installation:

Coverage Area Environment

Square footage:

Building Materials: (circle all that apply)
       Interior (cinder block, drywall/stud, poured concrete)
       Exterior (concrete, metal, brick)

Type of Ceiling:
       Drop tile, hard (drywall/concrete), open
       Ceiling heights

Number of floors:
       Floor count per building
       Type of floor construction (wood joist, poured concrete/pan)

Average Number of daily users (including staff and guests):

Existing Wireless Network
Platform/Age:
Number of AP's:
Switches to support the Aps – PoE+?
Current firewall solution:

Schedule a Call