

MANDARIN ORIENTAL Hotel

Increasing guest safety and amenities through seamless wireless

The 2.8 million square-foot Time Warner Center houses the Mandarin Oriental, New York. The Five-Star hotel occupies the top 20 floors of the Center's two towers and includes 251 guest rooms. Whether for business or pleasure, the hotel offers many amenities including floor-to-ceiling views of Manhattan, an exclusive 14,500 square-foot spa, and a total of 7,000 square feet of meeting space that includes a spacious ballroom. The Mandarin Oriental, New York, caters to more than 225,000 guests annually. Services include twice-daily maid service and VIP check-in.

The Challenge

The Mandarin wanted to provide wireless communications to all of its guests, regardless of the purpose of their stay. The hotel's goal was to offer uninterrupted wireless service throughout the building, including in elevators, parking garages and stairwells. Additionally, to ensure the safety of their guests in the event of an emergency, the Mandarin wanted to enable first responder contact with seamless two-way radio communication.

However, the materials used to construct large structures like the Time Warner Center and Mandarin Oriental can distort radio frequency (RF) signals and interrupt wireless communication, thus hindering the use of Wi-Fi, cellular phones and the radios used by first responders and security staff.

The Solution

When Dave Heckaman, regional director of IT during the hotel's construction, was charged with implementing a wireless communication infrastructure, emergency preparedness and the safety of thousands of people was his top priority. Heckaman needed a wireless system that acted as a utility capable of distributing a wide range of standard protocols seamlessly throughout the building.

To meet his need, Heckaman's team selected Black Box (BBOX) distributed antenna system (DAS) and WLAN solutions to support a full range of wireless devices and applications, including smartphones, Wi-Fi, two-way radios, pagers, and more.

BBOX worked closely with Heckaman and his team to design and engineer a system that would meet their needs. BBOX brought in experienced RF engineers to conduct a comprehensive site survey, taking into account building construction materials and coverage requirements.

BBOX's team of experienced project managers oversaw every aspect of the system design, procurement, installation, testing and acceptance, working closely with all involved parties to ensure a quality installation with minimum disruption to the building's construction timeline and opening.

Objective:

To increase guest safety and enable the use of wireless applications and devices throughout the entire hotel, which includes 251 guest rooms, more than 7,000 square feet of meeting space, and 14,000-square-foot spa.

Benefits:

- Increased guest safety
- Efficient and improved staff communication
- Enhanced guest services and amenities
- Increased guest satisfaction

"With the wireless network operational, the hotel staff says the benefits of having BBOX are immeasurable solely because of the enhanced guest safety," said Heckaman.

"What began as an insurance policy against wireless communication failure soon materialized into a remarkable amenity for the Mandarin and its guests."

Hotel operations are more efficient as guest services are enhanced by the pervasive wireless coverage. For instance, prior to check-in, a VIP guest can request that hot tea arrives in his suite shortly before he does. While the guest is checking in, the front desk can notify the member of the catering staff in charge of that room via their hotel issued tablet, so by the time the guest reaches his room, his tea is ready and waiting for his enjoyment.

The Mandarin Oriental Hotel sought to provide its guests with seamless wireless coverage for their use and, most importantly, their safety, and in the process, took a large leap forward in becoming a true 21st century facility.

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Dave Heckaman, Regional Director of IT



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