IVA
COMMUNICATIONS LLC.

CASE STUDY

The Telkonet iWire System™
Sandman Hotels, Inns and Suites

Sandman
HOTELS | INNS | SUITES

Type of building	Hotel
Location	Throughout Canada
Years built	1970s - 2005
Number of hotels	31 hotels
Number of floors	Ranges from 2 to 20-plus floors
Number of rooms	Ranges from 37 to over 300 rooms
Telkonet installation date	Started in January 2005

Challenge

Find a reliable Internet solution at the right price point that could be rolled out across the chain, regardless of a building's infrastructure or geographic location.

For more than 35 years, Sandman Hotels, Inns and Suites have made it their business to ensure that their guests have an enjoyable, comfortable and affordable stay. As part of their legendary service to meet their guests' needs, Sandman wanted to offer high-speed Internet access. However, because they wanted a standardized offering, they were challenged to find one solution that could work in all of their 31 hotels, inns and suites across Canada. Since Sandman properties were built throughout the past 35 years, the buildings were constructed with different materials, ranging from cinder block to wood to concrete. Consequently, Sandman needed an Internet system that could deliver consistent Internet connectivity regardless of a building's infrastructure, size or location. Sandman properties, which range in size from 37 rooms to over 300 rooms, are located along highways and in city centers.

Another challenge was that some properties were wired with CAT 3 or CAT 5, while others were not, depending on when the property was built. It would have been cost-prohibitive, time-consuming and disruptive to wire all of the buildings with CAT 5. Salim Kassam, Vice President of Marketing for Sandman, needed to find one system that could accommodate all these needs.

Salim knew that wireless Internet access was not an option for his chain since the Canadian federal government does not allow its employees to use WiFi because of security reasons. If he offered WiFi, he would lose his government clientele.

Solution

By leveraging a building's existing electrical wiring, the Telkonet iWire System saved cost and time, while providing reliable Internet access that could be deployed at all locations.

While exploring various Internet options, Salim came across an ad for Telkonet's iWire System, which uses powerline communications technology to deliver in-building Internet access using a building's existing electrical wiring. This concept had immediate appeal because it meant that Telkonet's system could be used in any type of building construction without the need to install any new wires, such as CAT 5, in any of the properties.

Salim decided to put the Telkonet iWire System through a rigorous and thorough test. By design, he cross-tested the system at four specific properties that represented a broad sampling of construction types, age and geographic locations. All aspects of Telkonet's iWire System – including connectivity, speed, ease of use and customer support – were used and evaluated for a period of 90 days.

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"The Telkonet iWire system can be used regardless of when the property was built, since every hotel has electrical wiring. Most importantly, the system provides the level of service that our guests are looking for."

Salim Kassam, VP of Marketing
Sandman Hotels, Inns and Suites

Salim understands the importance of making all of his customers happy, so he had both his internal and external customers participate in the system testing. If he purchased a solution that didn't work for his internal customers – Sandman employees – they would be less efficient and less satisfied. Since this would ultimately affect how well they could take care of their clients, he wanted their feedback, as well as input from his hotel guests. Telkonet's iWire System was tested by hotel guests in hotel guest rooms and in business centers by Sandman's IT department. Salim was pleased to find that the Telkonet iWire System performed to everyone's expectations, providing the level of service that was required. There were no problems with the Telkonet system's speed or consistent Internet connectivity. The users found the system simple to use, and very few guests needed to call the customer support number for assistance.

Salim elaborated, "We were impressed by Telkonet's innovative system as it enabled us to deliver the Internet over the building's existing electrical wiring, saving costs and time. Our goal was to find a technology that would provide reliable and secure Internet access to our guests in a cost-effective manner. The Telkonet iWire System achieved this in our beta tests at four of our locations. Based on the success of these tests, we selected Telkonet as our partner in providing this amenity chain-wide to our guests."

Salim noted that there were no disruptions to the hotels' operation during installation, which only lasted about a day per hotel. Sandman's electricians simply installed the Telkonet backbone – the Telkonet Gateways and Telkonet Couplers – in the electrical rooms. No guest rooms were disrupted during the process because the installation was all done behind the scenes. After such positive test trial results, Sandman moved forward with Telkonet to roll out the system throughout their entire chain in 2005.

The Telkonet iWire System is now in use, with good success, in business centers and guest rooms, and has even met the needs of guests with high-bandwidth demands. Salim explained, "Telkonet's iWire System gives us the flexibility to have it installed by our own people. It is scalable – we can increase the number of rooms that offer Internet access by simply buying more Telkonet iBridges™, which guests connect to their computers. The system can be used regardless of when the property was built, since every hotel has electrical wiring.

Most importantly, the system provides the level of service that our guests are looking for. And there is absolutely no stress for our operations staff because Telkonet provides 24 x 7 guest support. This is a big factor since it enables our staff to spend their time on other guest requests. Telkonet seems to have allayed all of our concerns. We are pleased to be able to offer a reliable Internet system as one of our amenities, and believe that our hotel guests will realize that they have made a smart choice by staying at Sandman Hotels, Inns and Suites."

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