



WiFi has become an expected, indispensable amenity for guests

CORPORATE

Connections

THANKS TO ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY, CORPORATE AND LEISURE GUESTS ALIKE HAVE SKY-HIGH EXPECTATIONS WHEN IT COMES TO WIFI.

Corporate travel has made a comeback this year with executives taking to the skies once again to engage in face-to-face meetings, network at conferences and explore new properties.

Choice Hotels Asia Pac has reported a surge in corporate bookings in recent months with Sydney leading the charge as the most popular destination for business stays.

“Occupancy levels in Sydney continued to climb steadily through May and June, and into July and we see this trend continuing in forward bookings out to the end of the year,” said Choice Hotels CEO, Trent Fraser.

Rather than taking multiple trips in a month, corporate travellers are now opting to take longer stays than before the pandemic, Choice finds, and the trend towards ‘bleisure’ (a blend of business and leisure) travel continues.

“Corporate bookings are currently averaging five days in comparison to four days in 2019, which indicates that travel habits are changing,” said Fraser.

“Workers are fitting more into their trips such as taking the time to network or attend events, involving more nights away for additional work or social engagements. They’re also tacking on leisure trips to their business trip, including a weekend with friends or

family away with their weekly work commitments.

“This has translated into 20% growth on pre-pandemic length of stays.”

This return of corporate travel is good news for the hotel industry, but it has reinforced the need for high-quality working spaces and top end technology.

NEED FOR SPEED

When it comes to WiFi, RN Projects Global Director, Christoffer Svalstedt, says it’s no longer a value add or ‘nice to have’, it’s an essential requirement.

“WiFi is an expectation and needs to be seamless, reliable, and secure,” he said.

“Any business knows that – just like at home – a true sign of great WiFi coverage is when no one is talking about the WiFi.”

ONE FOR ALL

While essential for the corporate traveller, the reality is that every type of guest relies heavily on WiFi, and so too does staff.

“Today, WiFi connectivity is simply about supporting our lives, be it work, leisure, or just day-to-day interactions,” Svalstedt said.

“From an end-user perspective, WiFi has become an expected, indispensable amenity for guests, visitors, hotel staff and hoteliers alike.”

SUPPORT, SECURITY, AND PRIVACY

According to Svalstedt, providing great WiFi is straightforward, securing great WiFi is “an absolute imperative”.

“Operating a WiFi network in a mixed-use environment, where guest and business operations co-exist, requires an advanced level of configuration and support, with security, privacy and network up-time at their core,” he said.

“Such concerns are the reason larger hotel groups mandate minimum network hardware, configuration, and documentation, to support and protect their owner and guest data and productivity.”

He makes a number of recommendations to hoteliers that are opting to upgrade their network.

“Any upgraded or new data network should be designed to meet all current network standards, be scalable, capable of supporting future applications, and include professional services to secure and document the delivered network,” he said.

As more and more business and operational applications are being layered over the data network, Svalstedt says hotel operators need to think about how they will leverage their WiFi network.

“While it used to be the case that networks were deployed on a per application basis, today a single complex data network can, and should, support all business, operational and end-user applications,” he said.

“These applications also require WiFi to be in places previously never dreamed of, such as housekeeping storage areas, car parks and spa areas.” ■

“A true sign of great WiFi coverage is when no one is talking about the WiFi.”

*Christoffer Svalstedt,
RN Projects*