



## At your service – 3Com wireless systems power guest communications at the Marmara Hotels

### ULTRA-RELIABLE, LOW-COST SOLUTION:

- Reliable high-speed wireless services
- Easy, single-point, centralised management
- Future-proof network with scalable, flexible architecture
- Speedy implementation
- Trusted technology from a single vendor

### The Marmara Hotels Group

One of Turkey's leading hotel groups, The Marmara Hotels and Residences Group has eight prestige properties across the country and a luxury all-suite hotel in the heart of Manhattan, USA. The group's corporate headquarters and management teams, including marketing, accounting and IT, are based in the exclusive 5-star Marmara Istanbul in the centre of the Turkish capital.



## Overview

Freely available, trouble-free wireless Internet access is an important part of the superior customer service that guests expect of a prestige hotel chain, like The Marmara Group. With limited IT resources it was difficult to maintain a reliable, consistent service and individual hotels and residences were responsible for running and maintaining their own network.

As the group expanded, a centralised IT team was set up in The Marmara, Istanbul to provide a management and operations centre for all the Group's properties. This included setting up a corporate network for the Group's business functions, which could also be used as a centralised control point for the guest networks in each hotel and residence.

Core to the IT strategy was implementing a solution that provided one-touch remote management from a single console, while providing the reliable, high-speed wireless connection that guests required.

Following extensive research, it was clear that 3Com was uniquely able to deliver the wireless infrastructure they needed. The group installed 3Com® WX series wireless switches with 3Com Access Points in each hotel and a 3Com Wireless Switch Manager providing centralised management. Together they deliver a cost-effective, high-performing network that makes best use of the Group's limited IT resources.

The scalability of the 3Com solution means that new access points and wireless networks can be added as the group expands, delivering easy, reliable wireless connections for their guests to enhance customer service and future-proof their IT investments.

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The Marmara Hotels and  
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### Greater reliability and performance

When the IT team at the Marmara Hotels Group started consolidating wireless network services they were faced with several challenges. Previously, each hotel had set up and run its own systems so there was a range of hardware – and software – from several vendors to support. No policies or processes were in place, services were unreliable, and there was increasing pressure on hotel staff to deal with guests having connection problems.

With no remote management or configuration possible there was little the IT Department could do. It was potentially damaging to business, as guests have come to expect high quality wireless Internet access as well as a phone and TV in the room.

“Guests want to log on to read their email several times a day. They want problem-free, reliable, high-speed connections,” says Koray Adiguzel, the Group’s IT Manager. Anything less reflects badly on the hotel.

Consequently, the group looked for a solution that would enable them to deliver the quality of service that guests required, which was cost-effective and above all could be centrally managed to minimise the demands on limited IT resources.

Through his studies for an M.Sc from the University of Portsmouth, Koray was aware business continuity is vital and found 3Com was the one vendor who could provide a complete wireless networking infrastructure with one touch central management.

The first time this centralised control has been used in the hospitality market the 3Com-designed solution has a guest network in each hotel or residence, consisting of a 3Com® WX2200 wireless switch directly connected to the guest network backbone switches. The 3Com Switch 4500 with Power over Ethernet (PoE) was chosen to provide the secure flexible LAN connectivity. Each of the 3Com Access Points – a mixture of 3Com Access Points 2750 and 3750 – is connected to the LAN switch.

A VPN connection from the central corporate network to each of the WX-powered guest networks enables the wireless infrastructure to be managed by IT staff through a single console, using the 3Com Wireless Switch Manager. With this 3Com software tool, IT staff can configure Managed Access Points (MAPs) remotely, check on service availability, and much more. Although wireless Internet access is a free service for guests, the 3Com system provides the central reporting that allows for services to be charged for, if required. At a glance staff can see if a guest is connected, the bandwidth they are using and so on.

The system has enabled the group to comply immediately with a new law that requires those supplying Internet services to log all the Mac IDs of devices using their network.

“Many of our competitors are having to spend thousands of dollars on solutions that will enable them to comply with the new regulations, while we can just log the information within our existing system,” says Koray.

“It’s one of the reasons we selected 3Com. We wanted a solution that was future-proof. We wanted to protect the cost of our original IT investment by having a network that would be able to accommodate new requirements and technologies as they came along.”

### End-to-end 3Com

The Marmara Group’s entire wireless infrastructure is run on 3Com equipment, including:

#### 3Com WX series wireless switches

In each hotel the 3Com Wireless LAN Controller WX2200 lets users connect securely to the wireless LAN and roam as they wish. Together with the 3Com Wireless Switch Manager software they can control the 3Com wireless LAN MAPs. Providing unparalleled scalability, the WX2200 can be part of a mobility domain that manages and controls thousands of MAPs. A 3Com Wireless LAN Switch WX1200 connects the central corporate network to the remote LAN controllers to enable the wireless guest networks to be managed centrally.

#### 3Com Access Points

The wireless networks at each hotel or residence include a mixture of 3Com Wireless LAN Managed Access Points 3750 and 2750. Each of these APs provides easy, standards-based integration with the wireless LAN switches and controllers for automatic, no-touch remote configuration and management.

#### 3Com Wireless Switch Manager

The 3Com Wireless Switch Manager provides single-point control of the MAPs from the operations centre at The Marmara Hotel, Istanbul. The application includes a planning tool, with built-in formulae that helps automatically determine the best MAP location. Centralised deployment with remote configuration means that IT staff can set up entire networks with a single click. The application also has a number of enhanced features – such as detecting RF interference – that help to eliminate coverage gaps and optimise performance.

#### 3Com Switch 4500 – Power over Ethernet

For secure, flexible LAN connectivity the Marmara Group used the 3Com Switch 4500. Each of the MAPs is connected to the switch. Because PoE provides electrical power and data connectivity over a single cable, there were significant savings on the cost of deploying the wireless APs.

## Top-rated service

Given the scale of the project, the replacement and installation of a complete wireless network infrastructure across the group's hotels, implementation was very quick, says Koray. The new guest networks were rolled out within two months and the improvement was evident immediately.

### Greater customer satisfaction

Easy and problem-free connection to the Internet has become a key factor when visitors – particularly business people – choose a hotel. For a prestige chain like The Marmara Group, it is important that the level of service reflects the high quality of their hotels and residences.

When the IEEE, a professional association for the advancement of technology, held a conference there, it became especially important. "There were 600 people and the network behaved wonderfully, providing high speed coverage and great reliability throughout," says Koray. The IEEE were impressed and have said they will be back – a prime example of how customer satisfaction can increase revenue through repeat business.

### Low maintenance, low cost administration

With a small central IT team of five to service all the Group's nine hotels, centralised management was a necessity. With the 3Com solution all locations can be managed through one management console.

"The cost of controlling the network is virtually zero because it's so reliable. It's low maintenance, low cost for us so we can concentrate on other areas of our job," says Koray.

### Reliable, scalable infrastructure

"We're hugely impressed by the reliability of our wireless guest networks," says Koray. The high level of availability means that IT staff can concentrate on tweaking the system to provide the highest level of performance rather than having to troubleshoot bottlenecks and network failures. With support for

1,500,000 access points the network infrastructure can easily accommodate new hotel networks – and, as importantly, administer them through a single management point.

### Future-proofed solution for greater investment protection

As the Group expands, the IT team want to be sure that they have a network infrastructure that can take advantage of all the latest technological developments – and provide new services – while maximising their initial IT investment. Koray explains: "With 3Com we know that we have great support and from end-to-end of our networks we have high-quality engineering from a trusted name. We also have the reassurance that they have a wide range of innovative products that will be able to meet all of our future requirements."

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## Want to know more?

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