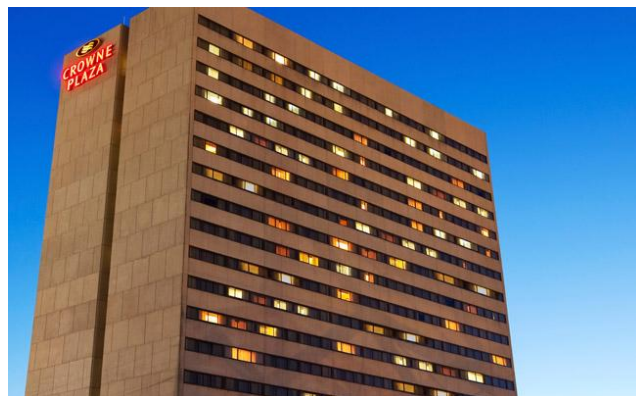


Minor Internet Change Creates Major Impact for Crowne Plaza Houston West

Sponsored by: Delos Internet

Crowne Plaza Houston West is a 344 room full service hotel located in Houston's Energy Corridor. The hotel's proximity to many of the major oil, gas and technology companies makes it a popular destination for both corporate and leisure guests looking to escape hustle of downtown.



As with any large hotel striving to provide a higher level of service, management explored economical ways to increase guest satisfaction. Achieving guest loyalty usually takes more than just a reasonable price for the hotel room. Quality of the stay, service, and convenience can provide a hotel an added edge. Recognizing this, management at Crowne Plaza Houston West regarded High Speed Internet service as a key amenity that has a substantial impact on total guest satisfaction.



In today's 'always connected' world, the demand for fast and reliable Internet connectivity is quickly becoming one of the most important determining factors in where a guest chooses to stay. Visitors are demanding more and more speed from their hotel WIFI or LAN connections. Guests are using remote VPN (*Virtual Private Networking*) and cloud applications to connect to their company's network remotely so that they can be productive while away from the office. If the Internet is slow, the frustration level rises, and that means more time working and less time enjoying their stay.

The hotel had a pair of T1 Internet circuits that were used to share the load for the entire hotel, including both guest rooms and meeting rooms. Each one of those T1's had a speed capacity of just 1.5Mbps (*megabits per second*) for a total of 3Mbps. A T1 used to be the gold standard for Internet, providing higher reliability as opposed to DSL or Cable service. However, the T1 is also a technology introduced in the 1950's to bundle telephone lines. It's meager 1.5Mbps bandwidth capacity is already much slower than most high speed residential service, yet hotels squeeze hundreds of connections onto these T1 circuits by slowing down and rate limiting the user's connection. This configuration accommodates guest requiring only simple web page viewing, but it becomes a huge aggravation to anyone looking to be productive.

Hotel management knew it needed faster Internet connectivity, but didn't know how much. Delos Internet, a high speed business-only Internet service provider in Houston, offered a unique solution to accurately gauge utilization. The hotel signed a 10Mbps contract, but 30Mbps of service was provided for a 60 day trial period. During the 60 days, the amount of traffic used would be analyzed by both Delos Internet and hotel management so that the hotel could determine if an increase in the speed beyond the 10Mbps was needed.

Positive guest feedback was immediate. After only one week, the hotel's largest corporate customer contacted management to rave about the improvement in speed. What was once a major guest headache is now a major selling point for the hotel. Not only did Crowne Plaza Houston West have fast Internet, but it was much faster than any of its competitors. After less than a month, a decision to use the full 30Mbps instead of 10Mbps was made due to the overwhelming positive feedback.

For two T1 circuits, the hotel paid close to \$800 per month and received speeds of just 3Mbps. For only double the price, the hotel increased the speed by a factor of 10. With one simple upgrade, the hotel made one of its biggest improvements in customer satisfaction, and ultimately guest loyalty. A minor modification in a hotel budget made a major difference in the guest experience.