What Wi-Fi-as-a-service means for fast food, retail sectors

Wi-Fi is no longer just a conduit to connect to the internet. If used properly, it is a connection to the world and all of the opportunities it holds. As the South African business IT landscape moves away from outdated 20th-century tech, an increased focus is placed on the internet of things (IoT).

This focus demands insights that can be gathered from wired and wireless tech, including mobile, while facilitating the journey to the cloud. In the fast food and retail sector, in particular, any downtime means exponential losses, and customer insights are crucial to the continuous garnering of brand equity, and operational efficiency.

Main pain points

According to Brad Fraser, Infoprotect CEO, customers experience various pain points in their endeavour to capture and action these insights. "The main pain points experienced include the balancing of opportunity with risk, the speed of innovation which drives faster 'refresh cycles', and the essential insights that must be gathered from the mobile generation's experiences."

As such, Infoprotect has partnered with Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise Company, to deliver an efficient full-stack solution. "Networks are moving from legacy IT network requirements to a service delivery focus. In this modern age, cell phones and tablets are increasingly becoming the preferred network devices – and these offer a wealth of data-driven opportunities," confirms Pieter Engelbrecht, business unit manager at HPE Aruba. "Considering the synergy between our offerings, it was inevitable that we would partner to offer Wi-Fi-as-a-service to drive this tech shift."

Brad Fraser

Wi-Fi-as-a-service

Wi-Fi-as-a-service includes guest Wi-Fi, which allows fast food and retail businesses to grow their databases, enrich visitor insights, and market to visitors in real time.

This enables data capturing, progressive profiling, multi-venue configuration, configurable templates, content delivery and social login options.

"The powerful insights are captured and visualised within the intuitive, configurable cloud-based Skyfii Analytics and marketing solution," adds Fraser. "The dashboards and reports generated are designed to empower data-driven decisions within both marketing and operations teams."

Essential to network management, intelligent reporting delivers measurements such as foot traffic counts, keeping unique guest tallies and identifying peak visitor times. Geo-fencing technology defines areas of interest while heat mapping allows the tracking of visitors in real time.

Enabling targeted marketing

By understanding how customers spend their time engaging with a business, and how they utilise the Wi-Fi, targeted marketing strategies can be developed.

Through the correlation of various data sources, strategies become driven by behavioural segmentation and proximity targeting, attributing marketing campaigns to real visitor behaviour and, ultimately, leading to greater success. It all begins

with a good quality Guest WiFi experience, building a rich customer database and then through the use of behavioural data, marketing to customers in a real time, contextual and relevant fashion to drive loyalty and sales.

Addressing business and IT challenges

In addition, mobile-first networks are designed to address business and IT challenges. "These platforms act as the intelligent software layer between network infrastructure components, third party IT services, and business and end-user facing applications," adds Engelbrecht. "This, combined with a reliable and secure analytics and location engine, offers access to contextual data crucial to effective business intelligence."

Together, the companies will be empowered to host, provide connectivity (WAN, LAN), offer business services and manage customers' entire network from end-to-end- utilising a state of the art data centre and ensuring the utmost in data security and analytical insights.

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