OVERVIEW

Established in 1883, Moonee Valley Racing Club (MRVC) is the historical home of Australia's most prestigious horse race — the Cox Plate. As one of the most progressive racing clubs in Australia when it comes to customer satisfaction and race day services, MVRC identified the need to improve patron satisfaction at race events. Each event saw the increased use of smartphones and tablets by patrons, making it challenging for users to be able to communicate through the 3G network, given the high volume of traffic concentrated in one location. This meant that patrons had less than an optimal experience using online services such as social media, betting services and, often, their email tools to communicate with friends — certainly not acceptable to the younger generation.

REQUIREMENTS

To provide MVRC customers with a seamless race day experience by enabling race goers to use smartphone technology successfully throughout all areas encompassing Moonee Valley Race Course. Additionally, Wi-Fi network to offer enhanced support in backroom and operational areas at the race course.

SOLUTION

- 21 x ZoneFlex 7982
- 6 x ZoneFlex 7762
- 4 x ZoneFlex 7762-AC
- 3 x ZoneFlex 7762-S
- 2 x ZoneDirector 3050 WLAN Controllers

BENEFITS

- The public Wi-Fi access network investment has delivered increased customer satisfaction and a quantifiable growth in MVRC's customer base
- Members area now has 14 entry/exit points controlled by hand-held Wi-Fi enabled scanners ensuring there is only one entry per membership card at any one time — increased satisfaction of paying members.
- MVRC today is providing Internet access as value add within its corporate event packages and now has the ability to use smart phone apps, such as Passport, for cashless payment in bars and restaurants.
- Wi-Fi network has reduced MVRC's data costs associated with administration
- Enhanced security monitoring, video surveillance and two-way radio on race days.

Stadium:
Moonee Valley Racing Club

SUBHEAD?

Moonee Valley Racing Club (MRVC) is the historical home of Australia's most prestigious horse race — the Cox Plate. Established in 1883, Moonee Valley has enjoyed a rich and vibrant history of thoroughbred horse racing at its unique amphitheatre track and was the first Australian metropolitan track to conduct night racing.

The record attendance at the Moonee Valley Race Course is 50,670 for the 1960 Cox Plate with the largest attendance for a night meeting being 32,342 in 1998. MVRC has a 40,000 standing capacity.

As one of the most progressive racing clubs in Australia when it comes to customer satisfaction and race day services, MVRC identified the need to improve patron satisfaction at race events. Each event saw the increased use of smartphones and tablets by patrons, making it challenging for users to be able to communicate through the 3G network, given the high volume of traffic concentrated in one location. This meant that patrons had less than an optimal experience using online services such as social media, betting services and, often, their email tools to communicate with friends — certainly not acceptable to the younger generation.

In mid 2012, MVRC's objective of providing its customers with a seamless race day experience — in particular those of the younger generation by enabling race goers to use smartphone technology successfully, resulted in the decision to deploy comprehensive indoor/outdoor Wi-Fi coverage for all areas encompassing Moonee Valley Race Course. This is the first solution of its type to be deployed in Australia.

The Club understood that improving the customer experience on race day would ensure growth in the customer base and revenue through return

Stadium:
Moonee Valley Racing Club

Ruckus Smart Wi-Fi connected thousands of patrons, sharing the glory of Black Caviar first reaching the finish line 24th consecutive times at William Reid Stakes in March 2013

visits. Michael Browell, Moonee Valley Racing Club CEO, said, "I was keen to find a cost effective solution that would deliver the outcome and benefit that the patrons were needing. We could have spent ten times what we did with the same outcome, but it would not necessarily have increased speed, or coverage, or enhance the race goers experience any further."

Getting to the finish line

Betting on the horses goes hand in hand with attending the races. In the past, patrons would place their bets through the TAB and bookmaker at the racecourse. Queues can be long and frustrating; punters are removed from the social aspect of the day and regularly miss out on seeing the race live. Patrons are now embracing online betting to avoid these drawbacks using their smartphones, where access to these services has improved significantly during large events.

In addition to installing a public Wi-Fi access to service its patrons, the MVRC executives looked to utilise the Wi-Fi deployment to meet a number of other operational needs. These included:

- Scanning members' cards at multiple entry/exit points of the Member Pavilion area to ensure there is only one entry per membership card at any one time

- Wireless network connectivity to current Point-of-Sale (POS) and Staff Rostering terminals and access to back-end systems and databases

- Applications and network access requirements such as security monitoring, video surveillance and two-way radio on race days.

- Enabling guest internet services for non-race events held at MVRC

MVRC selected Triforce as the IT integrator for the project, managing the IT services related to the deployment as well as delivering layer 3 managed services. The Wi-Fi technology was delivered by Ruckus Wireless and Vertel was chosen to provide the carrier infrastructure and install all networking services — as a fully managed service.

"We looked at other options but none of them were able to deliver the outcome we were looking for in the time and budget we had and the Cox Plate day was a deadline that couldn't be negotiated, added Browell.

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Stadium:
Moonee Valley Racing Club

Ocean Park not the only winner on Cox Plate Day

The Club wished to have the Wi-Fi access and enhanced network available to its patrons, as well as to tighten security around its members' area, for the Cox Plate Carnival period in late October. This meant that the consortium of three organisations involved in the deployment faced tight deadlines.

Implemented over multiple phases, the project was completed within an eight week period. "A Wi-Fi project of this scope would typically take six months," said Triforce General Manager, Corie Marinucci. During the final 2 weeks, testing at minor meets was conducted allowing the successful roll out to go live prior to the Cox Plate Day where numbers exceed well over 30,000.

The robustness of the network was ensured through Vertel's fully managed Wi-Fi access network, two WLAN services, each with unique SSID, a 180 Mbps Carrier Ethernet point to point link from the Eureka Tower in South Bank to the Mooney Valley Race Course and access to 180 Mb of uncontended IP Transit across the network.

It was critical that the technology deliver a consistent and high-availability access within the stadium and surrounding grounds that would inevitably be filled with a high density of active mobile devices. "We were excited to work closely with MVRC, Triforce and Ruckus. We designed and delivered a network that exceeds today's stated requirements and easily scales to address future network growth," said Andrew Findlay, Managing Director of Vertel.

Ruckus provided Wi-Fi equipment for both wired access points and meshed access points. The latter is used in venues where Ethernet cabling isn't readily available to be able to hook up wireless access points. The 34 access points and two Ruckus ZoneDirector™ 3000 WLAN controllers have ensured that, throughout the Moonee Valley Race Course, all punters can use their smartphones and tablets on a continuing basis.

In a race course environment, there is a variety of noisy RF [radio frequency] surroundings. This is due to the fact that many of the suppliers involved in creating and supporting the racing event bring radio transmitting devices to the event. Unfortunately, these details are generally not known until race day itself.

Conventional omni-directional Wi-Fi design delivers an inconsistent user experience with signal levels rising and falling. The Ruckus directional [adaptive antenna] outdoor AP technology ensures the user experiences no inconsistency. When designing for density, Ruckus is always looking for ways to increase the RF energy to where it is needed most. In the MVRC case, Ruckus technology involved using sectorised antennas to bounce RF signals off the grandstand roofs into hard to reach areas of the crowd.

"This free Wi-Fi network delivers pervasive performance which basically means stable throughput, providing density connections, superior interference mitigation and high scalability," said Marinucci.

Built to deliver a consistent, always-available service for up to 10,000 concurrent clients, the network experienced over 1,000 concurrent users during the Cox Plate race meet. To log on to the Wi-Fi network, users need to submit an email address which enables MRVC to build a database of customers to deliver targeted messaging to encourage return visits as well as conducting satisfaction surveys to help MVRC continue to improve the customer experience.

In addition to providing Internet access to patrons, the Wi-Fi network today underpins integration to the POS system and scanners for managing access to member's only areas as well as network access to back-end systems

Wi-Fi with Caviar — a winning mix!

More recently, March 2013 saw the William Reid Stakes at MVRC feature the pride of the nation — Black Caviar. MVRC staged a special night of racing and entertainment. And knowing that there would be higher than normal attendee numbers watching the next chapter in the Black Caviar legend sharing with family and friends their joy via their smartphones and tablets, the Wi-Fi network capacity was increased, by a simple software upgrade.

It was critical that the technology deliver a consistent and high-availability access within the stadium and surrounding grounds that would inevitably be filled with a high density of active mobile devices. "The feedback has been very

Stadium:
Moonee Valley
Racing Club

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Michael Browell, CEO
Moonee Valley Racing Club

positive. Punters that came to Moonee Valley had the benefit of a stable and comprehensive Wi-Fi network that they had not experienced at any other racing venue, so we were in effect the first to market with a full Wi-Fi solution," said Browell.

While, at the Cox Plate, heaviest usage was on the public lawn and in the grandstand, the William Reid Stakes saw heaviest usage in the member's upper stand where usage peaked at 500 concurrent users. "Black Caviar's 24th consecutive win put extra load on the Ruckus Wi-Fi network which excelled in its performance on the day," said Brian Master, Operations Manager Moonee Valley Racing Club.

Leading up to the Black Caviar race the Wi-Fi network witnessed the transition of mobile Wi-Fi users from bars and function rooms to the vantage point of the members grandstand. Patrons in the stands were on their feet as Black Caviar entered the winning straight — smartphones raised in readiness to capture that personal moment in history.

Today, MVRC can elaborate on a number of commercial and operational benefits the Wi-Fi network deployment has delivered. The members area now has 14 entry/exit points controlled by hand-held Wi-Fi enabled scanners ensuring there is only one entry per membership card at any one time. This translates to increased satisfaction of paying members.

From a commercialisation angle, MVRC today is providing Internet access as value add within its corporate event packages and now has the ability to use smart phone apps, such as Passport, for cashless payment in bars and restaurants. The Wi-Fi network has also enabled a reduction in the Club's data costs associated with its administration department. But, more importantly, the public Wi-Fi access network investment has delivered increased customer satisfaction and a quantifiable growth in MVRC's customer base.

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