



San Mateo Event Center

The San Mateo Event Center uses a variety of Aerohive APs for a high-performance, scalable wireless LAN

Challenges

- Reliable and scalable wireless coverage for hundreds of mobile devices in use across the event center's seven buildings spread over 48 acres
- Secure Wi-Fi network for employees and visiting vendors
- Compatibility with Event Business Management Software applications already deployed

Results

- The Event Center has simplified invoicing by using an event-management iPad app that utilizes Aerohive's Bonjour Gateway
- Centralized management and streamlined installation have significantly reduced deployment time and cost
- The Event Center can now quickly and easily scale up network connectivity for large trade shows

About the San Mateo Event Center

Over the years, the San Mateo Event Center (SMEC) has evolved to become one of the San Francisco Bay Area's top destinations for consumer and trade events, meetings, festivals, corporate events, sporting events and more. The Event Center features seven buildings spread over 48 acres. Events range from 200 to 10,000 people, depending on the event — for instance, the San Mateo County Fair — or a garden show, art show, concert or trade show.

The San Mateo Event Center's team of professional events managers' partner with companies and vendors. They help plan and execute events, and a big part of that is the cutting-edge Aerohive Wi-Fi network that covers the entire campus. If more network connectivity is needed quickly, the Event Center IT staff merely deploys additional Aerohive APs, which are automatically configured through network protocols.

"For four months, I was able to implement and manage the HiveManager and configuration of all the APs. Now that I have the Aerohive training — and a complete understanding of this robust Wi-Fi engine — it will only get easier."

— **Jared Putnam**
Systems Engineer, CBX Technologies

An integral part of the SMEC Wi-Fi network is Aerohive partner, CBX Technologies, an award-winning technology and consulting services firm.

The Challenge

Security concerns were first and foremost for the Event Center. It was vital that the Wi-Fi network provide secure access for employees and for visiting vendors if they requested it.

"The biggest technology challenge was the ability to provide Wi-Fi for a large number of devices over 48 acres and in seven buildings," said Jared Putnam of CBX Technologies.

Before the upgrade, SMEC's Wi-Fi network consisted of a handful of Aerohive APs and some ValuePoint APs, with two DSL lines pushing their bandwidth, Putnam said. With multiple event buildings, the Wi-Fi network was greatly lacking and overstressed. For SMEC to be an acting ISP, the Wi-Fi infrastructure required a complete evaluation and scalability upgrade, Putnam said.

The Solution

Instead of re-inventing the wheel, when CBX won the SMEC contract, the company contacted the original sales rep to look into Aerohive and what it could offer.

"After consulting with Aerohive, it was clear that the best solution for SMEC's needs was to remove all APs except the Aerohive APs and begin the expansion project," Putnam said.

"Since there were existing Aerohive APs, and they were under a year old, we wanted SMEC to maximize its initial investment," Putnam said. "And with the recent research on Aerohive, it was clearly a robust system that could handle all SMEC's Wi-Fi needs. And at that time we were only scratching the surface of Aerohive's capabilities."

CBX began the initial deployment at the end of 2011 and began the expansion of the wireless network in May 2012. At SMEC, CBX is using three models of Aerohive APs: AP350s — high-performance, two-radio APs for challenging indoor environments; AP330s — high-performing, highly reliable 802.11n APs; and AP170s — high-performance outdoor access points.

The Value of Aerohive Training

Putnam received training at Aerohive's Sunnyvale headquarters, and he plans to use that training to implement a wide variety of features at the Event Center.

"At the beginning, it was the basic network functionality that Aerohive AP's could offer. Now that I have gone through the AEWC (Aerohive Essentials WLAN Configuration) and AAWC (Aerohive Advanced WLAN Configuration) classes, the following features will be implemented in the near future; dynamic airtime scheduling, meshing, band steering, Bonjour Gateway, security features, and monitoring and reporting," he said.

Putnam is particularly impressed with Aerohive's Bonjour Gateway. San Mateo Event Center employees use Apple iPads, as well as a platform called EBMS (Event Business Management Software), created by Ungerboeck Systems International, which runs all of their software needs.

"They are building an app for iPads that will allow event managers to be in the field and invoice their vendors at the time, and give them everything they need right then and there. And with the use of Bonjour Gateway, we can broadcast Bonjour Gateway across the Wi-Fi, set up Air Printers in specific locations, and they are on

the network and accessing the domain software. This simple, real-time invoicing is just utilizing technology to its best."

Putnam spoke highly of the Aerohive training he received, as well as their corporate culture in Sunnyvale.

"In the recent months, I have worked with several Aerohive employees, both on the phone and in person," he said. "I have never met a solution provider that provided the customer care and appreciation for their customers as much as Aerohive has, from the salesman to the technical support engineers."

"Recently I visited the Aerohive headquarters in Sunnyvale for four days of basic and advanced training classes. Again, all the Aerohive employees were very attentive to my needs on the understanding of the Aerohive solution, so that I can provide the cutting-edge technology to the SMEC and other CBX clients."

The Results & Recommendations

Putnam said that his experience managing the SMEC network has been smooth. "The HiveManager Network Management System is very user friendly. I basically started with the HiveManager with no classroom training. I received roughly two-to-three hours of hands-on with an Aerohive systems engineer."

"For four months, I was able to implement and manage the HiveManager and configuration of all the APs. Now that I have the Aerohive training — and a complete understanding of this robust Wi-Fi engine — it will only get easier," Putnam said.

Regarding his immediate expansion plans at SMEC, Putnam said CBX plans to set up the admin network via Wi-Fi with a RADIUS server so that the employees can access their network data, applications, etc., from anywhere on the property.

As to whether he would recommend Aerohive to others, Putnam answered emphatic "Yes!"

"Moving forward, we would be glad to recommend Aerohive as a Wi-Fi solution to our customers and future customers," he said. "For anyone looking for Wi-Fi, we are recommending Aerohive, because it's secure, scalable and affordable."



Contact us today to learn how your organization can benefit from Aerohive wireless LAN architecture.

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