

Bankers Life Fieldhouse

Where wireless LAN is not the only winner on the playing surface!



"Once we experienced true wireless connectivity, there was no going back. Thanks to Extricom, each and every mobile device under our roof works without a glitch - 24/7."

Kevin Naylor, VP Information Technology at Bankers Life Fieldhouse.

Indianapolis Indiana's claim to fame is undoubtedly all about sports. The Indianapolis 500, Brickyard 400 and the Mac Tools U.S. Nationals allow the city to boast the two largest single-day sporting events in the world and the world's largest drag race. Add in the Indianapolis Colts, the Indiana Pacers, the Indiana Fever and the NCAA headquarters, and it's easy to understand why sports can overshadow everything else the city has to offer.

So when the city decided to replace its popular Market Square Arena and build a larger, more impressive indoor stadium in 1999, it really had to outshine its predecessor as home to multiple sporting events, college basketball, indoor concerts, and ice hockey. The Bankers Life Fieldhouse, for several years, was ranked the "No. 1 venue in the NBA" by the Sports Business Journal/ Sports Business Daily Reader Survey.

When it came time to enhancing the venue and keeping it "fit" enough for the players and fans of the Indiana Pacers, Indiana Fever and Indiana Ice events, stadium managers, namely the IT team, had their work cut out for them. Kevin Naylor, VP Information Technology at Bankers Life Fieldhouse, comments, "When it came to upgrading Wi-Fi communications, we couldn't afford to be less than perfect. That meant delivering true wireless connectivity, so that each and every mobile device under our roof would work without a glitch, 24/7."

Wireless LAN in a large public venue (LPV) that can accommodate nearly 20,000 spectators, is set up to further engage the fans in the stands and offer users enhanced Wi-Fi experience on and off the playing surface. Bankers Life Fieldhouse had a wireless network in place, one that met their immediate needs, but ultimately, could not keep up with the increasingly heavy traffic and data sources. The system was based on standard 2.4GHz microcell architecture, but soon proved unstable due to co-channel interference.

In search of what they openly called "the perfect Wi-Fi solution," Bankers Life Fieldhouse IT team knew they had

to corner the market and adopt a new and innovative system that would deliver where other solutions had failed. "SignalShare, the leading provider of wireless Internet solutions for the sports and entertainment industries, had the market-proven LPV solutions and deployment track record we were looking for," said Naylor. "It didn't take us long to assess their offering that was based on Extricom's



Channel Blanket™ technology and system architecture."

Bankers Life Fieldhouse required a comprehensive WLAN solution to cover an arena with a seating bowl capacity of 18,165, and additional suites and other luxury areas in the venue. Uniquely suited for large outdoor or indoor venues, Extricom's Channel Blanket architecture allows single channels to blanket the entire arena's seating bowl, eliminating the need for difficult, if not impossible to deploy, microcell system designs. At Bankers Life Fieldhouse, the promise of delivering basic Wi-Fi (data transfer) in the stands and on the playing surface, coupled with RFID, a guest access portal, video streaming and broadcast/multicast control, were the keys to successful system deployment.

The initial system included 8 Extricom switches and access points deployed throughout the stadium, made up of 4 LV-2000 and 48 APs to cover the entire bowl with a total of 8 blankets, with 4 2.4GHz blankets (g/n)

Challenge

Large, popular indoor arena, home to major sports and entertainment events could no longer rely on their wireless network, nor keep up with the venue's increasingly heavy traffic. Venue management needed a new, innovative WLAN solution to cover a seating capacity of 18,165, suites and other luxury areas in the venue, and deliver uninterrupted Wi-Fi, 24/7.

Solution

IT management sought after "the perfect Wi-Fi solution," specifically tailored to LPVs. After being introduced to Extricom's Channel Blanket™ technology and market-winning system architecture, they knew it was the right choice for their venue. The system allows single channels to blanket entire sections of the arena's seating bowl, with Wi-Fi in the stands and on the playing surface.

Result

Installation and deployment of Extricom's wireless LAN network was quick and seamless. Since its integration into the stadium, fans, journalists and staff have enjoyed high-quality, uninterrupted Wi-Fi service with increased ease and speed. The system also provides quality RFID, a guest access portal, video streaming, broadcast/multicast control and ARP caching.

and 4 5GHz blankets (a/n) in use. As the number of users increase, the IT team plans to introduce additional features such as LPV swith cascade, more blankets to accommodate the demand, and dedicated food services applications planned for the near future.

System installation was carried out by SignalShare, and has been in production pilot mode since the start of the 2013 NBA season. Successfully deploying a wireless network in any large-size venue is a great technical challenge, especially when installing equipment in windowed areas. "During installation, SignalShare paid special attention to esthetics and hiding their equipment so that APs were not in full view of the fans," commented Naylor. During installation, the APs were strategically placed behind billboards and in the catwalk areas, so as not to interfere with rigging points for incoming shows. These installation points were key in guaranteeing good signal coverage throughout the seating bowl.



"At the end of the day, installing and administering the Extricom system was quick, seamless and straightforward," said Naylor. Since its installation, a host of fans, journalists and stadium staff have noted the increased ease and speed of the venue's wireless network. Additionally, the network facilitates SignalShare's audience engagement platform, Live-Fi where the facility maintains control of network access, E-mail capture and the ability to send messages and ads to fan's devices connected to the network. With it, management will see the fruits of their labors with ROI, increased team revenues, merchandising sales and nearly 20,000 happy and excited fans all talking, all texting, and all accessing data on their mobile devices – all at the same time.

About Extricom

Extricom is a manufacturer of 4th generation enterprise wireless LAN solutions, based on its Channel Blanket™ technology. Extricom solutions are used by customers in numerous industries worldwide, including Education, Healthcare, Warehousing, and a rapidly growing number of large entertainment and public venues.

While adhering to the 802.11n standard, Extricom's patented, topology provides wire-like reliability, high throughput, seamless mobility, unparalleled noise immunity, and is easy to install and maintain. In an era of intensive wireless usage powered by the market explosion of smart phones, iPads, iPods, tablets and other communication devices, voice, data, video, and location services are delivered with an always-on, robust and mobile Wi-Fi connection to any client, in any environment. Extricom Interference-Free™ WLAN is purpose-built to slash wireless complexity and future-proof your network for tomorrow's multi-service demands.

Extricom serves its growing global customer base through offices in the USA, Europe and Japan, and by working with a global network of distributors and partners.



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