Thames Valley Start Ups Choose TP-LINK To Provide Better Internet

Business-class Wi-fi supports collaboration and innovation in dedicted tech hub.

GROW@GREENPARK

Green Park

Industry: Business Park

Location: Reading, Berkshire

Profile: Green Park is a large business park near Reading, offering a host of office buildings with quality space to rent.

"As a small business, performance is directly linked to connectivity. Poor wireless is not just frustrating as a user, it means everything takes longer which is simply unprofessional. I know I can walk into GROW and start working right away and not give infrastructure a second thought."

Tom Chant,
from Digital Marketing Agency,
Become Digital

GROW@GreenPark is an innovation space for start-up businesses in the Thames Valley, at Reading's Green Park estate. It enables talented, small technology firms to collaborate and co-create in a region dominated by well-known companies such as Oracle, Microsoft, Cisco and Verizon.

Around half a dozen start-ups occupy GROW, which comprises a meeting room, three small meeting areas, an events area for up to 100 people, plus a sponsored innovation lab. Between 40 and 50 individuals also 'hot-desk' in the space, configured to spur collaboration and synergies between companies.

Prior to the conception of GROW, start-ups and SMBs in the region felt overlooked because of attention being lavished on tech clusters in London. As a result, they had found it difficult to attract funding, mentors and coaches, investors, as well as professionals ranging from marketers, designers and coders. Collaboration and synergies between businesses is a major selling point for GROW members, who pay for internet access as part of their tenancies.

Internet Issues

Businesses had to rely on a standard Wi-Fi network provided by Green Park called Park Cloud, which typically returned download speeds of 2.39 Mbps, and upload speeds of 6.58 Mbps.

Despite the installation of a dedicated IP line using the Park's ISP, poor signal strength continued to make it difficult for GROW entrepreneurs to make the most of the space.

As heavy users of portable tablets and mobiles, and who also thrive on technological synergies to keep down costs and increase profits, entrepreneurs relish the positive impact that technology can have on collaboration and brainstorming.

The quality of Wi-Fi for gatherings in the technology event space was particularly patchy, leading to poor connectivity and falling satisfaction levels among start-up and guest visitors alike. Unscrupulous non-members would also leach off the bandwidth provided, using it to send large volumes of marketing emails and spam content.

ConnectTVT started experiencing attrition, as start-up businesses, who rely on good bandwidth and connectivity to underpin their agile business approach, started to move out.

The Solution

ConnectTVT installed a TP-LINK C9 Archer Wireless dual band gigabit cable router to provide an improved dedicated WLAN network across its site for businesses, hot-deskers and guest users.

The device was chosen specifically for its ability to generate excellent area coverage and reliable Wi-Fi thanks to three dual band antennas with high-powered signal amplifiers. It also has in-built beam-forming technology, which actively targets the Wi-Fi signal to mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, even over long distances. The Archer C9 broadcasts wireless on two frequencies –5GHz and 2.4GHz – to provide a total 1.9Gbps of total bandwidth, perfect for video streaming, while the two and three gigabit USB ports make it easy to share local printers and media files within the network and between devices.

tp-link

"High speed, secure and dependable wi-fi is essential for our business. We rely on a secure & consistent internet connection for our communications, SAS messaging and the remote sessions we deliver to client. We use GROW as our central hub to bring the team together, a space with poor connectivity would be detrimental to our ability to deliver work for our clients."

Neil Keating,
from Bright Horse

Within one hour of its installation, businesses reported a marked improvement in core functions such as email. The network was further customised to create two password-protected separate Wi-Fi networks: a high-security, low-bandwidth network for guests, and a dedicated network for businesses and permanent hot-deskers that provided access to the main network, with download speeds of 20.27 Mbps, and upload speeds of 19.52 Mbps.

This was especially welcome for GROW members, which range from fledgling environmentally-conscious car clubs to media and web design companies.

For such start-ups, applications like Skype, enable them to stay in touch with clients, and sophisticated web design programmes that require the uploading of large video and content files, a solid WLAN connection is vital.

To ensure a uniformly strong and secure wireless connection across the innovation lab, GROW installed a TP-LINK EAP 120 ceiling mounted access point. Controlled by an administrator, with changeable SSID passwords for individual users within the same network, this enabled the lab to manage access to the device and make sure its customers have priority.

Meanwhile, RADIUS secure authentication and rogue access point detection technology prevents non-members from taking advantage of the network.

The device's captive portal function means that all Wi-Fi guests have one convenient method of identification, while its simple mounting design enables it to be easily fixed onto a wall or ceiling.

Performance Payback

GROW's efforts to provide high quality internet to tenants, an entry level wireless to guests and the blocking of Wi-Fi for unsanctioned users has become its biggest asset: the number of tenants has increased by 150 in the last 6 months, resulting in higher revenues.