The number one tenant amenity today is Wi-Fi

By Riaan Graham

In today's crazy technology age, we are seeing many new developments being incorporated into the home - from smart fridges, lighting, CCTV cameras to smart TVs and mirrors. In some parts of the world, we are even seeing automation being fully integrated into the home. Residents are wanting a connected home where wireless services link every aspect of their work and play together, and property developers are looking at ways to ensure this is all provided to the home owner.

Riaan Graham, sales director for Ruckus, sub-Saharan Africa

While full home automation has not been high on the average house hunter's priority list, things are about to change – just look at the stats.

In 2016, 80-million smart home devices were delivered worldwide – a 64% increase from 2015, according to IHS Markit. What's more, the global smart home market was valued at around $24.10bn in 2016 and is expected to reach approximately $53.45bn in 2022, growing at a compound annual growth rate of slightly above 14.5% between 2017 and 2022. The Middle East and Africa is also expected to be one of the fastest growing regional markets for smart homes in the coming years, where the major growth drivers include awareness among consumers for energy consumption, on-demand services and rising disposable income. This is changing expectations all round.

Property developers have their work cut out for them

As a property developer or investor, you invest a lot of resources to provide a great living experience in your multi-dwelling units (MDUs). But whether it's student housing, luxury apartment complexes, assisted living or other properties, your residents expect more today. They no longer see you as just the landlord, they also want you to be their network service provider. That means supporting a large number of smart devices, demanding video and gaming services, and other high-bandwidth wireless applications. This means making the network experience just as reliable as residents' water, heat and electricity.

Those are a lot of technical challenges to overcome. But your residents don't want to hear about how hard it is to provide great Wi-Fi in places with thousands of devices, large indoor/outdoor coverage areas and multi-storey buildings. All they know is that the property down the street offers free Wi-Fi. Does yours?

Wireless dreams can quickly turn into nightmares

Network access rolled into the rent sounds great to residents. This is becoming a major driving decision for people to determine if they would like to move or stay in their current residence. However, wireless dreams can quickly turn into nightmares - for both residents and the business - if the Wi-Fi isn't simple, reliable and secure. A resident's love for Wi-Fi will quickly turn to hate if connecting their devices is a chore, or if they have to constantly provide credentials to log back onto the network. If residents are relying on the property owner for Wi-Fi, it needs to be protecting their sensitive traffic.

As a (property owner) Wi-Fi provider, one should look at the following:

- To deliver high performance across hundreds of units and thousands of users – even in environments with mixed indoor/outdoor spaces and varying construction material;
- To deploy access points and wireless solutions that support more simultaneous devices and higher bandwidth applications, even in challenging residential environments. Patented BeamFlex+ antenna technology adapts for interference and other wireless challenges automatically to provide consistent connections to every device and user;
- To look for simple, secure on-boarding management so that Wi-Fi doesn't have to be more complicated than any other utility on your property. Find a solution where residents can connect any device, anywhere on the property in seconds, through a branded self-service portal. They can log on once and never have to do anything again. And they can do it all through a platform that protects every connection with the strongest wireless encryption.

In the multi-dwelling housing market, amenities are king! This message is consistent across the board within condos, student housing and assisted living management organisations. In today's world, the number one tenant amenity is Wi-Fi. Whether it is a young professional who works from home, a student accessing course content, or senior citizens needing to communicate with healthcare providers, they all have one thing in common: the need to stay connected.

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