

" Wireless Internet access is a key issue in addressing a business audience, in addition to quality on the plate and customer-friendly service. "



Jean-Paul Van Avermaet, Managing Director, Autogrill Belux and the Netherlands



Autogrill leads business people back to the roadside restaurant. Autogrill finds a stable partner in Telenet, who thinks along and wants to move ahead.

Autogrill has set itself the task of making things as pleasant as possible for travellers on the road. With wireless Internet, it puts its Carestel and AC Restaurants back on the map of the busy business traveller. And that strategy is working, concludes Jean-Paul Van Avermaet, Autogrill Managing Director Belux and the Netherlands. He is in a position to know, because the Telenet VPN connectivity between the restaurants and the headquarters offers a fast overview of the till slips.

Challenge

- > Create an attractive image for business people
- > Make fast and flexible operational communication possible between restaurants and headquarters

Solution

- > Connection of the branches to the Telenet IP fibre glass network via MPLS IP-VPN connection
- > Cisco router with double PVC
- > Every roadside restaurant becomes a Telenet Hotspot

Benefits

- > Additional service to restaurant visitors
- > Fast communication between headquarters and restaurants via virtual business network with upload of till data and download of operational information

Few might know the name 'Autogrill', but most will be familiar with the brands AC Restaurants, Carestel Restaurants, Le Chesnoy, Food & Drinks at Brussels Airport, Pizza Hut Express, Starbucks, Panos, Délifrance, Quick, Ciao and Best Western. And those are just some of the 350 brands that are part of the largest service provider of 'food & beverage for travellers' in the world. "Roadside restaurants in particular don't have the best quality image in general," Jean-Paul Van Avermaet starts, "but our strategy to make things as pleasant as possible for people on the road is paying off. The range offers quality, the service is friendly, the presentation is pleasant and the general atmosphere is one of people who are enjoying rest, relaxation and entertainment."

An experience, business or entertainment

Autogrill had lost track of the businessman, and that same businessman had taken roadside restaurants off his route.

The renewed interest in roadside restaurants as an efficient place for appointments, short or long meetings and to avoid traffic jams is however the result of today's mobility problems, but it also has to do with conscious efforts of not just serving a plate of food. "We offer an experience that can be both business and entertainment," says Autogrill.

Autogrill modernised its roadside restaurants and made guaranteed wireless Internet access a key issue in addressing a business audience, in addition to quality on the plate and a customer-friendly service. Telenet installed Hotspot in all restaurants where Autogrill offers food and drinks. Every month, Autogrill sees some 3,000 Wi-Fi sessions, nearly exclusively for business use. Sometimes a matter of mailbox synchronisation; sometimes real work sessions whilst waiting for a traffic jam to end. Autogrill wants to further boost its services to business people with a Business Club card, whereby professional users can expect the same service in all branches.





VPN connection offers faster two-way information flow

The MPLS IP-VPN network of Carestel consists of a 20-Mbps Fibre connection from the headquarters and 30 ADSL connections from the restaurants with a maximum download capacity of 256 kbps. A Cisco router organises the data traffic from every restaurant: a Private Virtual Circuit (PVC) for data traffic from and to the headquarters and a second PVC for Internet traffic across the local hotspots. 42 roadside restaurants are equipped as Telenet Hotspot.

The MPLS IP-VPN solution by Telenet for Business combines the Belgian Carestel branches in a virtual private network, so they can communicate efficiently with the headquarters in Merelbeke. The IP-backbone by Telenet, over which critical business data can be exchanged, assures fast connections with high quality guarantees. It makes for faster decision making, according to Managing Director Van Avermaet: "It mostly concerns the transfer

of data from the tills. We synchronise several times a day, so we always have the most up-to-date information available. From their branch, our managers get access to IBOS, our internal back office application, where they can request all information online about products, activities, planning and staff management."

Win-win philosophy

Autogrill has an IT unit, which compared to the average efforts in its market segment, is well developed. "The fact that we have such a unit only facilitates our collaboration with Telenet," Jean-Paul Van Avermaet feels. "In Telenet, we found a stable partner in, which thinks along and wants to move forward. The willingness to listen and openness to enter new ways of collaborating is based on a win-win philosophy. You can find this on every level at Telenet, from high to low. That is why we will remain partners in the future."