CASE STUDY

FRANCE

HOSPITALITY

BUILDING A DIGITAL BUSINESS LAYER TO ENABLE SUSTAINABLE EVENT MANAGEMENT AMBITIONS

MONTPELLIER EVENTS

Create a unified network architecture to support new digital applications and a sustainable events strategy.

The events sector was seriously impacted in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid crisis. Conferences, conventions, trade fairs and concerts all had to be cancelled or postponed.

"We hope that the sector will be able to bounce back in 2022 and that we will be able to resume normal face-to-face activity," says Sandra Vernier, General Manager of Montpellier Events. "The general public and professionals want to be able to meet up again."

RETHINKING THE EVENTS INDUSTRY

As the name suggests, Montpellier Events is responsible for running conferences and events in the southern French city of Montpellier. In the year before the pandemic, 500,000 participants, exhibitors, visitors and spectators attended 300 events, including trade fairs for opera professionals, film shoots and international conventions.

Sandra Vernier explains: "We used the lockdown period to rethink our models but, above all, to invest in tools to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

"At the same time, we wanted to rethink our environmental footprint and come up with a more sustainable approach to organising events through ISO 20121 certification."

Delivering more sustainable events will help attract new business and strengthen Montpellier Events' appeal with existing clients, she says: "We are convinced

REQUIREMENTS

- Ensure robust network performance across a two-venue site
- Support a range of applications and environmental sensors, current and planned
- Provide real-time visibility into network performance

SOLUTION

- Aruba CX 8325 Core Switch series
- Aruba 3810M Series Server Access Switches
- Aruba 2930M Series Access Switches
- CX 6300M Series Access Switches
- Aruba 7010 Series Mobility Controllers
- Mobility Conductor
- AP-5xx series Wi-Fi 6 Access Points

OUTCOMES

- Enables high-performance connectivity for 2,000 simultaneous users
- Allows secure segmentation of network for visitors, operators and third-party suppliers
- Supports new digital touchpoints, creating new data points across all venues
- Establishes a modern, digital-first environment capable of hosting hybrid events

that hybrid events, blending the physical with the virtual, are here to stay."

SUSTAINABILITY CONCERNS TO DRIVE A NEW APPROACH

Sustainability requires events to be less wasteful in their use of resources and more considered in how they recycle or repurpose materials. It will mean Montpellier Events working with clients and suppliers to bring sustainable concepts to the supply chain. It will also require smarter facilities management.

> ❝ We took advantage of the pandemic to modernise our sites and, in particular, to optimise our computer and Wi-Fi networks to meet the needs of our customers. ❞

SANDRA VERNIER
General Manager, Montpellier Events

"Live events will return but we must not lose focus on our digital transformation," says Sandra Vernier.

Montpellier Events' digital transformation requires the integration and use of new applications and digital services which need to rely on a modernised network architecture. This new network is built on an Aruba platform. Working with Equans, an Aruba partner, Montpellier Events has used the last two years to reinvigorate its network infrastructure. It has established a unified approach to network architecture by bringing together its wired and wireless networks.

The Aruba Edge Services Platform (ESP), overseen by AirWave Network Management, features Aruba CX 8325 core switches, Aruba CX6300M and 2930M series access switches and more than 300 Wi-Fi 6 access points. Server access is provided through Aruba 3810M series edge switches. In sustainability terms, Aruba meets the highest standards of energy efficien-

cy and engineering design. All hardware is backed by Aruba's Asset Upcycling Service.

"Aruba's reputation in the world of access LAN and Wi-Fi is first-class," says Marie-Jésus Toro, IT and Telecoms Manager at Montpellier Events. "It means we're able present a unified network for the first time."

CONNECTIVITY FOR 2,000 VISITORS

Today, the Aruba network covers two Montpellier Events' venues: the Corum (conference centre and home to the Berlioz Opera) and Zénith Sud. The network has the capacity to handle more than 2,000 simultaneous connections.

The architecture creates a backbone for a range of guest, exhibitor and smart-building applications. It supports CCTV, access control and cashless applications. It also facilitates the development of new digital experiences for visitors, as well as enabling Montpellier Events to allocate separate network access points and bandwidths to different business users on the sites.

"One of our priorities was to have an IP infrastructure for all our partners, media and event organisers," says Marie-Jésus Toro. "Previously, we used different suppliers for each venue and each would bring in its own equipment. Today, everything is IP and we have visibility and control of everything that takes place on the network."

TOWARDS SMARTER FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Reuse and standardisation are the key principles of sustainability. At its simplest, a unified 'All-IP' network means that suppliers will need to bring less hardware on site. Fewer deliveries means lower emissions.

"We need to be more conscious of what equipment needs to be brought on site for every event," says Sandra Vernier. "We must be a lot more rigorous in how we monitor deliveries."

This will include energy, cooling and environmental monitoring. Montpellier Events is pursuing ISO 20121 certification, the new international standard in sustainable events. Certification is dependent on the organisation demonstrating it has the processes in place to monitor progress.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW STYLE OF EVENT

Our collaboration with Aruba has created a smarter, more sustainable events proposition for Montpellier Events. It will enable the business to host new types of events and offer a hybrid event experience.

"We have the network capacity to support the latest audio-visual technology for live-streaming and social media," says Benoît Poincet, Head of Audio-Visual at Montpellier Events. "This is an important aspect of modernising the event experience."

It means Montpellier Events has the infrastructure to host physical events and the network to extend these

events to a remote virtual audience. The organisation has strengthened its on-site expertise and is now capable of supporting clients' hybrid needs.

"We want Montpellier Events to consider its societal, economic and social approach," says Sandra Vernier. "I believe we have the foundations in place."

Contact Us