

Locking down networks, gaining new business

Mi-WiFi rolls out wireless guest services solution to drive new business and give hospitality customers secure Wi-Fi



Partner profile



Company	Mi-WiFi
Industry	Technology
Country	South Africa
Employees	25
Website	www.miwifi.com

Challenge

Mi-WiFi wanted to build a wireless guest network authentication solution uniquely created for the needs of hotels, restaurants and other entities that want to offer Wi-Fi hotspots for customers.

Solution

The company enabled secure Wi-Fi by integrating a SonicWall Clean Wireless solution into its flagship offering, including SonicWall Next-Generation Firewalls and SonicPoint wireless access points.

Benefits

- Solution gives establishments strong security and more network control
- Customers can take advantage of branding to grow revenue
- Reporting provides the ability to collect statistics for marketing purposes
- Mi-WiFi can give resellers new opportunities
- Partnership with opens new doors

Solution featured

- Network Security

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Kevin Meredith, Director, Mi WiFi

Founded in 2000, Mi-WiFi is a South African software development company. The company offers a wireless guest authentication solution, Mi-WiFi, that enables hotels, restaurants and other establishments to securely manage and control access to their wireless networks. The software-as-a-service (SaaS) solution helps businesses secure wireless hotspots so they are no longer open and vulnerable to security breaches or attacks.

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Mi-WiFi differentiates itself by offering a simple, scalable and brandable solution. It is simple to install and manage because configuration and installation is done through the company’s secure website. “Any authorized user can log on to the site and configure and manage it,” says Kevin Meredith, director at Mi-WiFi. “The solution can also scale from a few users to a few thousand. It works for the small coffee shop on the corner as well as big restaurants and hotels, large conference centers, and stadiums.” Users can customize the solution with their brand, so the front logon page can include a company’s name, logo and other corporate information.

The organization has a unique model for business growth: resellers buy the solution from Mi-WiFi and sell it to their own customers. “We’re actively engaged with resellers, doing walk-throughs and helping them with the configuration so they can start running it and selling it,” says Meredith. “Because Mi-WiFi is a SaaS solution, it is available worldwide, with servers based across the globe.”

Company integrates solution with SonicWall Clean Wireless technology

When the company began developing the Mi-WiFi solution’s wireless guest services offering several years ago, it sought the best network security and wireless technology to support it. As an existing SonicWall customer, Mi-WiFi chose the SonicWall Clean Wireless solution, which combines the SonicWall Network Security

Appliance (NSA) Series and TZ Series firewalls with SonicWall SonicPoint wireless access points. The Mi-WiFi solution incorporates the Lightweight Hotspot Wireless API feature, as well as Reassembly-Free Deep Packet Inspection™, which offers additional protection by scanning against multiple application types and protocols.

The solution authenticates through Mi-WiFi servers to determine if users are allowed to connect to an establishment’s wireless network. Mi-WiFi employs an easy-to-use management interface that gives customers their own logon information, so they can issue tokens to rooms or individual network users. “The SonicWall Clean Wireless solution is actually the brains behind all of this,” says Meredith. “With its accessible, user-friendly interface, our system makes it easy for users to take advantage of what already has in place, including strong

Technology at work

Hardware

SonicWall Network Security Appliance (NSA) Series firewalls

SonicWall TZ Series firewalls

SonicWall SonicPoint wireless access points

Software

SonicWall Comprehensive Gateway Security Suite

network security and protection from threats.”

Solution gives establishments strong security and more network control

Mi-WiFi gives hotels and restaurants the opportunity to protect their wireless networks, because the solution is built on SonicWall Next-Generation Firewalls. “With , we’re able to offer a more secure solution that helps hotels and restaurants control network access,” says Meredith. “Many hotels in South Africa and around the world have open wireless networks, so anyone can log on, which is obviously a concern from a safety and client isolation perspective. Mi-WiFi, integrated with the SonicWall Clean Wireless solution, allows those hotels to lock all that down.”

Mi-WiFi also provides comprehensive management capabilities, so customers can gain more control over the network. For example, a customer can use the solution to easily create multiple networks, each granting access to specific user groups. Customers can also use the solution to manage whether users are permitted to access adult content or video streaming.

Branding offers the opportunity to grow revenue

Mi-WiFi customers are able to adapt the interface using their own branding, which can lead to revenue growth. One Mi-WiFi customer, a South African hotel, previously used an outside company to manage its free internet access. However, that company took all the

revenue. “With Mi-WiFi, that hotel is now advertising and marketing on its logon pages, and its internet access is also a lot faster,” says Meredith. “So customers are happy, and the hotel restaurants are seeing more traffic come through because they offer free wireless access.”

The solution also contains reporting capabilities that offer establishments the ability to collect statistics about their customers, such as usage details and device types. This information can be used to customize marketing campaigns.

Company gives resellers new opportunities

The company is also able to help its resellers gain market traction. “There are a lot of resellers out there, but they can’t talk to hotels because they don’t have a solid offering,” says Meredith. But with Mi-WiFi, those resellers have a new solution to offer. “We’re giving resellers a business model they can use to generate revenue,” he says. That business model benefits resellers, Mi-WiFi and end-customers alike. “What we’re trying to do is break the revenue stream and create a little bit of profit for Mi-WiFi, a little bit of profit for the reseller and a little bit of profit for the establishment.”

Partnership with opens new doors for Mi-WiFi

Mi-WiFi is a participant in the PartnerDirect program, which enables Mi-WiFi to gain expertise in technologies and incorporate those technologies into its solution. That relationship became especially

important to Mi-WiFi when acquired SonicWall two years ago. “In the past, when we went to clients to talk about SonicWall, a lot of people knew about other technologies and not about SonicWall. When acquired SonicWall, it made the sales discussion so easy,” Meredith says. “It opened up so many doors for us, and gave us an opportunity to sell into markets that weren’t available before. By attaching to Mi-WiFi, we now have an ‘in’ with clients. Once you have that, and you can show them value and give them a solution, they’re inclined to do a lot more business with you.”

New doors continue to open for the company. And now that the organization has released Mi-WiFi version 2.0, it expects business to grow even faster. “We’ve made the solution a lot faster and more secure,” says Meredith. “I estimate that we’ll have a couple thousand sites using it before the end of the year. The acknowledgement and feedback we’re getting from people we’re talking to is fantastic.”

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