

Technology investment provides the edge in an intensely competitive market

Fiber helps improve guest satisfaction with booking and vacation rental services, enables faster response to maintenance requests and ensures highly reliable operations during peak demand and storms. WiFi-based services provide a competitive edge, while an Ethernet Private Line delivers the ability to expand and link new locations with existing facilities and resources.

Bluewater Vacation Rentals and Real Estate is the premier vacation rental firm on North Carolina's "Crystal Coast," handling 19,000 reservations—and 350,000 vacationing guests—a year. It also operates a reservation call center, maintenance and housekeeping crews, a linen laundering facility for the rental properties, a pool and spa company and an insurance division. In addition, Bluewater is the area's largest real estate company, with over 30 agents.

How does Bluewater keep such a diverse group of operations—and locations—functioning efficiently? IT Manager Fred Fréaux says that it's by embracing technology that

"We switched everything to fiber connectivity. We're running seven hot-spot offices ... yet we still have the connectivity just like they were located right here in this building."

—Kevin Futral

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Bluewater continues to grow and operate so smoothly in this intensely competitive, service-oriented market. Since 2007, Spectrum Enterprise network solutions have been at the heart of that technology investment.

Connecting a diverse and demanding enterprise

During the most recent major technology upgrade in 2015, Bluewater migrated to all-fiber solutions, with Spectrum Enterprise providing reliable, dedicated 24/7 support for all business operations.

Today, at the core of the Spectrum Enterprise solution is an Ethernet Private Line (EPL) network with 5-15 Mbps circuits that connect the main office to Bluewater's other locations. This effectively creates a "network" that connects the diverse locations' voice and data solutions. The main office's 30 Mbps Fiber Internet Access (FIA) circuit provides symmetrical connectivity for reliable voice and data access. Spectrum Enterprise also provides high-speed Business Internet for additional redundancy.

Creating an exceptional guest experience

Marketing Manager Jordan Daniels says everyone at Bluewater recognizes that families may work a year or more to save for a vacation. That's why they're so passionate about enhancing



Jordan Daniels, Marketing Manager; Kevin Futral, General Manager, Bluewater Vacation Rentals Client since 2007

Client profile



Company

Bluewater Vacation Rentals and Real Estate

Industry

Vacation Rentals and Real Estate

Services

Ethernet Private Line
Fiber Internet Access
Spectrum Business Internet
Fiber Connect TV

every aspect of the vacation experience, paying careful attention to guest surveys. Daniels says that “from booking to maintenance, we’re rated on how quickly we respond.”

Bluewater’s technology investment is critical in providing this speedy and satisfying response. For instance, Spectrum Enterprise fiber solutions are helping the company complete 30 percent more work orders per day, resulting in better service for guests. Connectivity also helped the real estate division close over \$131 million in sales and 490 electronic transactions in 2015.

Bluewater Real Estate’s sales agents receive leads from the website via email and, within moments, are able to schedule showings, write offers, find comparable properties, pull tax records and stay in touch with buyers and sellers.

Another example is how the fast, reliable fiber circuit provides direct access to Bluewater’s property management system. When staff gets calls about bookings or reservations, they have immediate access to the information they need to answer questions and resolve any issues.

“Spectrum Enterprise delivers both performance and reliability backed by knowledgeable support services with integrated service-level agreements ... They have been very responsive in supporting Bluewater’s often accelerated growth into emerging markets.”

—Fred Frémaux

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Services other realty companies can’t offer

Emerald Isle, the most popular beach town on the Crystal Coast, is only 18 miles long and competition among realty companies is intense. “Because we’re the largest,” Daniels says, “it is imperative that we continuously reinvent our business.” Again, technology plays a key role, enabling Bluewater to provide guest services other firms can’t offer.

For example, Spectrum Enterprise hot-spots have been enabled across the island. This supports WiFi login to Bluewater’s guest network. In addition, Bluewater offers a new mobile app to answer questions for guests staying at the 1,300 rental properties it manages.

Hurricane-tested reliability

Bluewater’s fiber investment also helps the firm meet the unique challenges of operating on an island—including storms. Emerald Isle is only accessible by two bridges, so it’s critical to give guests early warning on evacuations. From HDTVs in the office lobbies, to the mobile app and guest network, Bluewater relies on all its technology to keep guests informed.

The firm also relies on the stability of its fiber connectivity. Frémaux recalls that, in 2011, most of the island lost power during Hurricane Irene. “Bluewater was operating on a generator. The night of the storm, I was logged in remotely and noticed that we were still making online reservations utilizing our Spectrum Enterprise fiber!”

Bluewater’s general manager, Kevin Futral, agrees, saying that, in terms of the ROI on the reliability of their Spectrum Enterprise solution, “It has been very successful!”

Agility for continued expansion

Futral says Bluewater will continue to grow, expanding into Atlantic Beach, Morehead City and Beaufort. The scalability of the point-to-point network will be an asset in adding new locations: “No matter where an



Spectrum Enterprise technology lets Bluewater’s many different divisions work together seamlessly, 24/7, to delight 1,300 property owners and 250,000 vacationers each year.

office is located, it still [gets] all of the support [from] maintenance, our laundry, housekeeping—everything.” This enables Bluewater to expand its sales and rental footprint without having to duplicate operational resources.

In terms of Bluewater’s continued commitment to investing in technology, Frémaux says Spectrum Enterprise will continue to be part of Bluewater’s future: “Their fiber, in my experience ... offers the best quality of service and SLA at a very competitive rate.”

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, is a national provider of scalable, fiber-based technology solutions serving many of America’s largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes networking and managed services solutions, including Internet access, Ethernet and Managed Network Services, Voice and TV solutions, Managed Application, Cloud Infrastructure and Managed Hosting Services. Our team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. For more information, visit enterprise.spectrum.com.

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