

## Liberty London Case Study

# Liberty: Historic Department Store Rebooted with Fresh Designs and Modern Tech

**Liberty is one of London's most recognisable stores. It was founded by Arthur Lasenby Liberty in 1843, and is steeped in history, yet Liberty is also thriving in the 21st century.**



## The customer

**Customer name**  
Liberty London

**Industry**  
Retail

**Location**  
London

**Number of employees**  
500

**Products and Solutions**

- Catalyst 9000 Lan Switch
- Meraki WiFi
- Cisco ISE (*Identity Services Engine*)
- VLAN for Security Policy Mangement
- ASA Next-Generation Firewalls

## Liberty

Listed among Retail Week's top 10 bricks-and-mortar retailers, it is also a successful retail platform – an always-on business with 500 employees. With its emphasis on customer service, the business requires an ultra-reliable digital backbone. But such systems can become obsolete over time.

“Two years ago, the company's network switches were outdated,” says Haaron Weekes, Liberty's head of IT service delivery and operations, who joined the business in 2016.

“Hardware and software support were no longer available, and there were a number of vulnerabilities in core infrastructure. Having legacy kit also meant we had occasional outages.”

Staff at Liberty London had to work hard to deliver core aspects of a modern retailer, such as a reliable and secure e-commerce platform and online customer service.

“Our legacy firewall was unmanaged and not fit for purpose,” says Weekes. “The infrastructure behind our virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) environment was unable to handle the workload, so the performance was poor for anyone who used it.”

The VDI – which enables employees to sign in to any desktop computer as if it were their own – serves between 250 and 350 users at the same time. But it was taking some staff more than three-and-a-half minutes to log on to their desktops.

Working with Cisco, Liberty set about overhauling the store's IT infrastructure.

## Working with Cisco

“Cisco was, and still is, a network provider, but our technology portfolio has been transformed; we now provide the technologies to change the way we work, live, play and learn, in a collaborative secure environment,” says Hema Marshall, its head of small and medium business sales.

Cisco replaced Liberty's firewall and implemented a flexible IT management tool that's able to combine and optimise multiple cloud platforms, and can be used to develop and run a range of cloud-based applications.

A new Cisco security system was rolled out that, among other things, only permits certain individuals to access specific tools and data. The internal network of Liberty was also refreshed and new in-store wifi installed.

The wifi system means the Liberty team has gained insights into its customers' trends via location analytics. Such client information can help to bridge the online/offline split and help turn window shoppers into online buyers.

It's critical for businesses to be able to quickly scale up and scale out as needed, but digital safeguards are just as critical – especially with new GDPR rules in place. Weekes believes the next-generation firewall has put Liberty in a better position to identify and defend against potential cyberthreats. The company has also increased its disaster recovery capabilities so that it can continue to serve its customers even in the event of any technical issues, says Marshall.

Most importantly, the shopping process is now more secure for customers too, and less complicated. “Improved management of what's happening across the business, with increased visibility and reduced complexity, allows the Liberty teams to focus more on innovation, and not just keeping the lights on,” says Marshall.

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## Hema Marshall

Head of Small and Medium Business Sales, Cisco

## **Conclusion**

This newfound ability to innovate and take on emerging challenges stems from several places – the stability of Liberty’s replacement network, the greater time efficiencies enjoyed by staff and, among other things, the benefits of its unified cloud system, which supports HR, antivirus and finance operations.

Liberty’s new cybersecurity system does research and work behind the scenes, “so we believe we’re in a better position to face tomorrow’s challenges”, Weekes says. The Liberty brand now has a digital backbone to match its powerful ambition.

This article originally appeared in [The Guardian](#).