

**Intelligent switching** helps  
SKJ Technologies deliver more substantial ROI



## Partner Profile

Based in Madison Heights, Michigan, SKJ Technologies is a systems integrator with more than 23 years of telecommunications experience. SKJ prides itself on providing customers with a single source for voice, WAN, Internet, and LAN solutions.

SKJ has been a premier Cisco reseller for several years, and in June 2002 became a Cisco VPN/Security Specialized partner, with several engineers certified in virtual private networks (VPNs) and other security disciplines.

## Project Background

Being close to Detroit, SKJ naturally has its share of customers in the automotive industry. One of these is Keykert USA, a leading manufacturer of automotive lock systems.

Keykert has intense networking demands, including frame relay links to its corporate headquarters in Germany and a Mexican subsidiary. Its daily operations revolve around an R&D facility in Wixom, Michigan, and a manufacturing plant about 45 miles away in Webberville.

The LAN in Wixom includes about 150 PCs and 30 CAD stations. The Webberville, Michigan, plant has about 200 PCs in offices and on the production line, and relies on Wixom's high-speed Internet connection for Web access.

## The Challenge

Keykert approached SKJ with two main problems. First, its network was experiencing significant performance issues, particularly in Wixom. Plagued by frequent network slowdowns, Keykert's IT staff suspected the problems were related to the massive CAD files being generated by the R&D team, but couldn't be sure.

Which brings us to the second part of the problem: the lack of a sophisticated network management system. Unable to pinpoint the source of bottlenecks, Keykert's IT staff had only hunches to go on, which sometimes led to finger-pointing between the company's network engineer and the CAD support group.

"Like a lot of companies, they had added a switch here and a switch there, but had no way to pull it all together to better manage everything," said Jason Kolevar, SKJ's director of technology.

And, like a lot of companies, they needed a solution that would offer a significant return on investment (ROI).

## The Solution

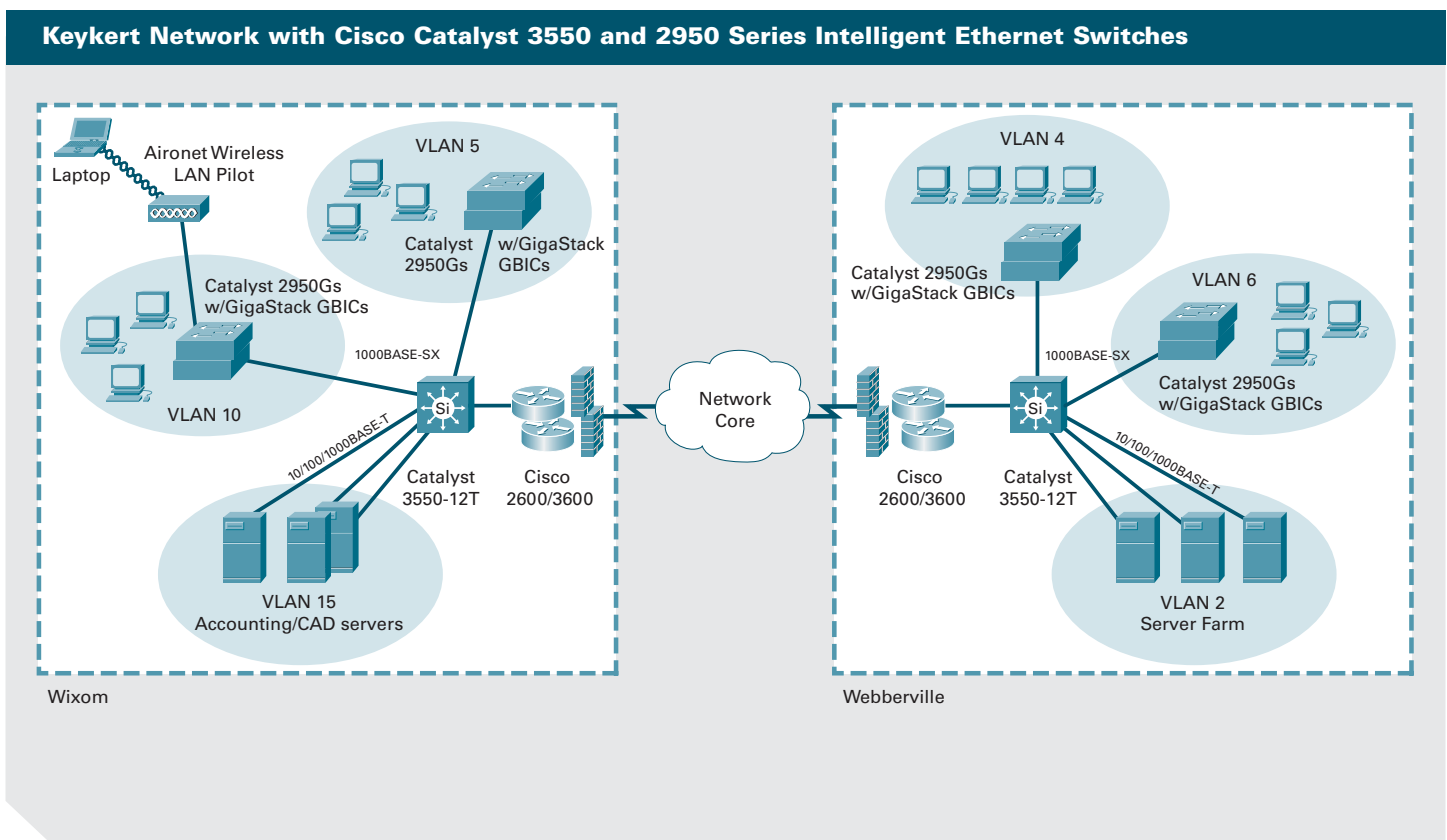
To meet Keykert's need for a highly available, more easily managed network that would support both current and future requirements, SKJ deployed Cisco Catalyst® Intelligent Ethernet switches at both the Wixom and Webberville sites.

This solution offered an immediate boost in performance, delivering GBIC-based Gigabit Ethernet across Keykert's mix of copper and fiber cabling. But the advantages extended beyond raw bandwidth and flexible connectivity. A unique combination of intelligent features and capabilities ensured Keykert could make the most of their IT resources, while also providing a solid foundation for future applications.

At both locations, Cisco Catalyst 3550 Series Intelligent Ethernet switches replaced various brands of 10BASE-T hubs at the network core, enabling inter-VLAN routing between VLANs configured for specific users and applications. This allowed Keykert to separate the CAD and PC networking environments, so traffic from one would never again impact the other. Traffic was further segregated along workgroup lines, with sales, marketing, and accounting divisions each utilizing a different VLAN.

Additionally, Cisco Catalyst 2950 Series Intelligent Ethernet switches were deployed at the network edge at both sites, providing true end-to-end quality of service (QoS) to prioritize traffic, alleviate bottlenecks, and control the rate at which individual hosts and streams transmit.

Another piece of the solution was a CiscoWorks management system, which supports remote monitoring, configuration, fault-detection, and troubleshooting through an easy-to-use interface. And with the 10BASE-T hubs out of the picture, Keykert no longer had to deal with managing a multi-vendor environment, allowing them to take advantage of a unified, Cisco IOS® Software-based network to reduce training, management, and troubleshooting costs.



As a result, Keykert's IT staff gained more granular control over network resources, while simultaneously streamlining administrative tasks. This not only made it possible to govern the numerous availability, QoS, and security features supported by Cisco Catalyst Intelligent Ethernet switches, but also made it easy to deploy new applications and uniformly configure the network.

During the course of the project, SKJ suggested Keykert could also benefit from the added mobility of a Cisco Aironet® wireless LAN solution. Keykert's team agreed to a trial run, giving them a chance to evaluate security features before deploying on a wider scale.

## The Result

Thanks to the Cisco solution provided by SKJ, Keykert was able to eliminate the network slowdowns that had hindered employee productivity, while simultaneously adding new levels of security and manageability to the network.

"One of the big advantages for them was the ability to manage the whole thing with CiscoWorks," Kolevar said. "That really intrigued them, because they already had a lot of Cisco routers in their environment, and this allowed them to pull it all together."

Cisco Catalyst Intelligent Ethernet switches also provided a solid foundation for Keykert's future plans, such as deploying multicast video services.

"That's been a huge benefit for us in general," Kolevar said. "Everyone's talking about converged networks with video and voice, and even if they're not ready to do it today, they want to make sure they're in the right place. I think that's a big plus when we're selling the Cisco solution."

Meanwhile, Keykert's executive team is benefiting from the added mobility and productivity of wireless LAN access, allowing them to stay connected when they meet with a colleague down the hall or gather in the conference room.

## Cisco Advantages

SKJ's team credits Cisco with being much more than a supplier of technology. Cisco supported SKJ's efforts throughout the project, not only participating in the initial sales and network design discussions, but also lending an expert hand when an interface configuration glitch produced severe broadcast storms.

"I guarantee the help of Cisco engineers went a long way with our customer," Kolevar said. "It definitely takes a team effort when you run into those kinds of issues. When you rip out a core infrastructure and plug it all in, it doesn't always happen perfectly, and it's important to get that kind of support when you need it."

Jim Greiner, SKJ's account manager, said the project also illustrated how Cisco's end-to-end approach to networking solutions can help drive sales and revenue. In Keykert's case, the addition of Cisco Aironet access points not only expanded the scope of the project at hand, but set the stage for SKJ to extend wireless LAN access to other parts of the Wixom and Webberville sites in the future.

"In my experience, it is a fact that end-users prefer to deal with single manufacturers and single suppliers," Greiner said. "As the number one manufacturer in this arena—meaning not only the largest presence, but the best products overall—Cisco makes a lot of sense to customers looking for an end-to-end solution. Cisco obviously isn't the only manufacturer we represent, but because of all these things, we're typically leading with Cisco."

**"I'm sure this is true all over the country, but in the Detroit area, there's a huge emphasis on cost containment and cost reduction. Like most companies, our customer was not in the position to make capital expenditures unless it was an obviously high-ROI project."**

**—Jim Greiner,  
SKJ Account Manager**

For more information

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