Mall understands shoppers as if it were online

Retail is no longer about the purchase, but the experience

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- Customer: Large mall
- Industry: Retail, Food service
- Location: US
- Number of employees: 1,000+

BUSINESS CHALLENGE
- Get more people to shop at the mall rather than online.
- Understand customers' shopping behaviors and preferences to make mobility profitable.
- Optimize staff and other costs.

NETWORK SOLUTION
- Always-on WiFi and Cisco Connected Mobile Experiences (CMX) give shoppers a more interactive experience, securely.
- Analytics help the mall operator and tenants understand shoppers' movements and behavior.
- Loyalty app tracks shoppers' behavior and markets to them.

BUSINESS RESULTS
- More people shop at the mall.
- Tenants and advertisers can increase their revenues by understanding foot traffic and buying habits.
- IT and staff costs are lower thanks to a cloud solution that manages mobility.

Introduction
Erika, a woman in her twenties, drives up to her local shopping mall. A valet makes parking hassle-free. Erika’s excited. She’s come to the mall today to buy a dress for her best friend’s wedding. As Erika enters the building, she logs on to the mall’s WiFi and signs in to its loyalty app with her Facebook account.

As Erika looks around, Erika snaps photos of the dresses she likes and sends them to her friends. It’s quick and easy because she’s still on the mall’s WiFi. And it’s not too long before the votes roll in. They’re unanimous. Everyone loves the sky blue Chiffon dress. She buys it without hesitation.

Business Challenge
Since 2011, mall traffic has declined appreciably (Wall St. Journal, January 26, 2014). People use their smartphones to compare prices rather than travel from store to store. By the time they go to the mall, they’ve already done all their research. They’re there to try things on and complete the purchase. And they want to stay connected to their friends and to other online information as they shop.

This is the challenge facing the retail industry as a whole: How do you get people to shop onsite when they can buy the same things more comfortably and more quickly at home or on their smartphones? And how can brick and mortar stores, and malls, capture the kind of behavioral data and analytics that online retailers can collect from their customers?
Our customer, a large mall in the US, understood these challenges. They wanted to offer visitors a fun, productive shopping experience that fit with their connected lifestyles. Also, they wanted to do it while keeping IT costs low. That’s when they called us.

Mobility Solution

“We’ve been able to get great insights into our shoppers and where they hang out. This offers a better shopping experience and we can make better business decisions.”
– Director Mail Operations, Large Shopping Mall in the US

Our professional-services consultants surveyed the mall and designed a Cisco CMX to fit, made possible by the Internet of Everything.

How often do people visit the mall? Which stores do they visit? How long do they spend in each? Do they just browse or do they buy? And how much do they spend? The Cisco CMX tells the mall operator all these things.

Cisco CMX also helps the mall keep IT costs down, because all this data is stored in the cloud as opposed to on-site and managed by Cisco as opposed to live staff. We give the mall quarterly reports on the performance of the WiFi network and recommendations for upgrades, which saves even more time and staff.

The Cisco CMX offers the shoppers important benefits too. It lets them sign in to a loyalty app via their Facebook account. It also keeps them connected to people outside the mall, because the WiFi never waivers, thanks to network access points in high-traffic areas, such as the food court.

Business Results

Insights for the mall

Before using Cisco CMX, the mall operator had to count the cars in the parking lot to know how many people came to the mall and when. Now, mall operators can track visitors through their smartphones. Sensors inside the mall give them a picture of foot traffic flow, telling them where people tend to bottleneck and which spaces attract the most people for promotional events.

It’s all at the mall operator’s fingertips. Software shows them a color-coded map of foot traffic and a dashboard that gives them analytics for business metrics and key performance indicators. They can use this data to make informed decisions on who to lease certain spaces to, where signage is most effective, and where extra staff might be needed to help keep shoppers moving.
Insights for tenants

Most of the data that’s valuable to the mall operators is valuable to the tenants, too. The mall can now give their tenants reports about their own foot traffic patterns, including what percentage of their shoppers are repeat visitors. Tenants can also learn which stores customers tend to visit before and after they come to their stores, and which promotions work better than others. They can then use this information to make their own decisions around staff, marketing, and product placement. These informed decisions lead to higher profits and lower costs.

Soon the mall will introduce an app that will help shoppers find the stores they’re looking for in the mall, and send them targeted promotions and advertisements based on their location, preferences, and past behavior. The Internet of Everything is becoming more of a reality every day.

Cisco consultants are ready to capture its value for you and to design a Cisco Connected Mobile Experience that brings shoppers back to your mall and gives them an unparalleled experience. While Cisco CMX saves you money, it also gives you the analytics you need to keep getting better.

For more information about Cisco Connected Mobile Experiences, visit http://www.cisco.com/go/cmx