

## Sports Apparel Firm Improves Productivity and Customer Satisfaction

Mobile solutions enhanced this manufacturer's productivity and streamlined business processes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<b>SPORTING GOODS MANUFACTURER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based in Washington state</li> <li>200+ employees</li> </ul>
<b>BUSINESS CHALLENGE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve warehouse productivity and support new inventory management mobile solution</li> <li>Enable real-time update of inventory of pallets and boxes</li> <li>Enhance network security, and provide wireless guest access</li> </ul>
<b>NETWORK SOLUTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cisco Wireless for Retail</li> </ul>
<b>BUSINESS RESULTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved productivity and response times for increased customer satisfaction and loyalty</li> <li>Reduced shipping errors</li> <li>Improved responsiveness and collaboration with visitors and suppliers without compromising company data and network security</li> </ul>

### Business Challenge

This company, which designs and markets high-performance men's and women's running shoes, apparel, and accessories in more than 40 countries worldwide, was looking for ways to enhance its productivity. The company's existing "pick-and-pack" process was paper-based, with scanners physically connected to PCs in a limited number of places in the facilities. This approach required products to be picked and corresponding boxes to be identified and brought to the packing station for scanning and shipping. The process was time consuming and prone to error, thus hindering employee productivity. In an ongoing effort to streamline business operations and improve customer service, the company decided to introduce new wireless technologies in their manufacturing facility in Washington and to mobilize an inventory management application from Lawson. This mobile

solution was driven by the need to increase productivity, reduce paperwork, and empower mobile workers via a ubiquitous access to inventory, shipping, and bookkeeping applications as well as the ability to wirelessly scan bar codes on boxes and pallets anywhere in the manufacturing facility.

"To support inventory management on the move with wireless bar-code readers, it was important for us to have a reliable, pervasive wireless network that would not be affected by any downtime and provide secure access anywhere in our facilities," says the network operation manager.

"Security was an important consideration, because the warehouse is located in a large industrial park. We wanted to prevent potential rogue devices or a security breach in order to protect confidential product and customer information." Once the company had a clear understanding of its requirements, the search for vendors to do the implementation began.

After a competitive bidding process, the company selected a Cisco® Premier Partner, certified in advanced wireless LAN and security, and located in Bellevue, Washington. The partner provided a complete mobile solution, from the bar-code scanning to possible evolution to passive and active RFID in the near future. The customer was very impressed with the Cisco fully integrated unified wired and wireless network solution. The solution offered the robust levels of security, reliability, and centralized management capabilities that the company was looking for, as well as investment protection of its existing Cisco infrastructure. The ease of management, the enhanced security

features inherent in a centrally-managed WLAN, and the ability to easily add mobility services on the same wireless infrastructure were also a hit.

### **Network Solution**

To support the customer's new inventory management system, the Cisco partner recommended a controller-based architecture to simplify deployment and configuration of the WLAN and eliminate complexity for the network administrators. The solution was integrated into the existing Cisco infrastructure, consisting of several Cisco Catalyst® switches and routers and a Cisco Secure Access Control Server.

The new wireless network included Cisco 4400 Series wireless controllers in a redundant configuration for higher availability along with Cisco Aironet® 1100AG Series access points installed throughout the manufacturing facility. The Cisco Wireless Control System software was also installed for centralized network management, security monitoring, and localization of rogue devices as well as wireless scanners.

After a rapid deployment due to the self-configuration mode of the solution, the customer's employees had full access to the corporate resources on the go, allowing them to access planning systems and shipping and bookkeeping applications, while visitors and suppliers gained basic secure wireless Internet access in the office. The company was already using Cisco Secure Access Control Server software to enforce privileges for its wired network, and was pleased to find that the software also allowed network administrators to authorize and authenticate users on the wireless network as well.

Although the company has tested the deployment with Symbol wireless scanners, it is continuing to evaluate other Windows-based scanners from Handheld and Datalogic to complement its existing deployment.

### **Business Results**

The Cisco Unified Wireless Network has allowed the customer to streamline its business processes. By providing mobile access and scanning in its facilities, the company eliminated several steps in the pick-and-pack process, such as the need to manually look up boxes and shipping addresses. The new application automatically tells employees which box to use when a product is scanned, and the shipping label is printed automatically. This capability has allowed the company to accelerate the pick-and-pack process, helped ensure shipping address accuracy, and helped link the right box with the right order. Customer satisfaction was increased, because shipping mistakes have been virtually eliminated and turn-around on shipments is much faster.

Cisco's Unified Wireless Network centralized management has proven invaluable for deploying access points easily and rapidly and for enhancing the company's network security by quickly detecting rogue devices and wireless intrusions. The secure nature of the network allowed IT staff to keep the guest network separate from the corporate network, maintaining the security of company data.

The wireless technology from Cisco provides the foundation for future solutions, including the deployment of context-aware mobility solutions such as network location service applications and asset tracking for wireless scanners. These deployments would require the addition of the Cisco Mobility Services Engine and Cisco Context Aware Software. Contextual information is collected for Wi-Fi-enabled clients and can easily be expanded to mobile assets that don't have intrinsic wireless

simply by adding radio frequency ID (RFID) tags and the software for tags. Contextual information can also be provided for both indoor high ceiling and outdoor environments.

#### PRODUCT LIST

##### Routing and Switching

- Cisco Catalyst 3760E and 3750E Series Power over Ethernet switches
- Cisco 2800 Series Integrated Services Routers (ISRs)

##### Wireless

- Cisco 4400 Series Wireless LAN Controllers
- Cisco Aironet 1130 AG Series Access Points
- Cisco Wireless Control System

#### For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Solutions for Retail, go to:

<https://www.cisco.com/web/strategy/retail/index.html>



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