



Setting the Manufacturing Wheels Spinning

Whirlpool Corporation had to transform its business. A legacy network stood in the way. Standardisation on a Cisco® platform opened innovation floodgates.

“ We depend entirely on connectivity and automation. If the network’s down for just 30 seconds, we lose 30 minutes of production. With Cisco that no longer happens. ”

Greg Fisbeck, Program Manager, Whirlpool Corporation

When you’re a worldwide manufacturer with a premium brand, you can’t afford production bottlenecks or live with creaking systems that stifle your inventiveness. Now, with a new Cisco network architecture implemented by Black Box Network Services, Whirlpool Corporation has greater operational agility and efficiency.

Challenges

- Design standard IT environment for factories and offices worldwide
- Improve network availability and reduce costs
- Provide platform for consistent global business processes

Whirlpool Corporation, the world’s largest appliance maker, keeps consumers focused on what matters by helping them do what they need to do: cooking, cleaning, washing, drying, heating, humidifying – so they can do what they want to do.

With market-leading products sold in 170 countries, Whirlpool needs to run its business on the right settings. Just as its customers’ homes do.

Yet its history had left a legacy of mixed network devices, even in the same plants. Wireless networks were struggling to keep pace as logistics looked to go beyond barcode scanning. This unstable set-up was costly to run and hard to troubleshoot.

“Limited network access left management without real-time views or control of production processes,” says program manager Greg Fisbeck. “We decided to standardise IT operations around the world.”

Case Study | Whirlpool Corporation

Size: 100,000 employees

Location: Global

Industry: Manufacturing





End-to-end Cisco integrated architecture frees Whirlpool Corporation employees to use their imaginations.

Solutions

- Worldwide refresh of 85 facilities using leading Cisco networking technologies
- Central monitoring and management with Cisco Prime™ technology

Our architecture protects investments

Working with its service provider Black Box Network Services, Whirlpool Corporation designed an up-to-the-minute network architecture. “We didn’t want to have to come back in a few years and do another refresh,” says Fisbeck. “So we chose Cisco as our global standard.”

All the latest, centrally managed

Networks were updated with 10 Gigabit Ethernet and Cisco Catalyst® switching. Local Wi-Fi systems were replaced with Cisco CleanAir® technology. Cisco IOS® Netflow helps collect and analyse network traffic. It’s all managed centrally through the Cisco Prime solution.

Business continuity assured

To maximise uptime, the design ensures two diverse paths with separate cabling, network devices and power feeds.

Careful roll-out risk mitigation

Black Box installed the solution at five pilot sites, including Casinetta, one of Whirlpool’s largest plants, and is now rolling it out globally.

Now that’s what we call transformation

Whirlpool Corporation is upgrading up to 20 locations a year from the United States and Europe to China, India and Brazil. With 85 global sites to complete, a key target is 99.99 per cent availability everywhere.

Key target is
99.99%
availability



Refreshing
networks in
85 worldwide
locations



Results

- Greater uptime and uninterrupted production
- Faster design innovation and time to market
- Easier to enable true mobility and the introduction of global business processes

The program is transforming operations. Information flows freely around the company. With assured uptime there's zero interruption to assembly lines. Video is speeding up design innovation and time to market.

Issues can be dealt with remotely before they impact on the business, saving time and expense. "Some engineers say they never realised how bad the old network was. Jobs that used to take half an hour now take just a few minutes," Fisbeck says.

Still more inventiveness, like empowering a mobile workforce: "People can go to any location, plug in a laptop and work as though they're in the office," concludes Fisbeck. "And with a global IT standard, it's much easier to run transglobal business processes."

Products & Services

Switching and Routing

- Cisco Catalyst 3750-X Series Switches
- Cisco Catalyst 2960-X Series Switches
- Cisco FlexStack and StackWise cabling

Wireless

- Cisco Aironet® 3600 Series Access Point with Cisco CleanAir technology
- Cisco 5500 Series Wireless Controller

Management

- Cisco Prime technology

For More Information

To discover more about the Cisco fixed and wireless networking solutions in this case study, visit www.cisco.com/go/en.

To learn how to manage your network more effectively, visit www.cisco.com/go/prime.

To find out more about Black Box Network Services, visit www.blackbox.co.uk.



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