Westfield Malls Get Closer to Customers

Reimagining the retail experience with digital solutions powered by Cisco

Westfield Corporation

Industry
Retail

Location
U.S. headquarters in Los Angeles, California

Number of employees
1700
Today’s consumers expect more

Today’s consumers have more choices than ever. Retailers understand that if they want to stand out from the pack, it’s up to them to engage every shopper with a personalized, enjoyable experience.

Westfield Corporation has been a pioneer in delivering a superior retail experience for more than 50 years. With 35 properties in the United States and the United Kingdom and more than $16 billion in annual retail sales, the firm is constantly exploring new ways to learn more about its customers and keep them coming back. Westfield set its sights on upgrading a major property in Southern California with innovative technology to transform the visitor experience.

“We’re in Century City, California, with literally 20 million annual unique visitors a year,” says Denise Taylor, CIO of Westfield. “What a footprint! We asked ourselves, what could we do to create an amazing experience that makes it a destination.”

Westfield envisioned a digitally enabled property that would not only provide an enjoyable shopping experience but also enable a wide variety of other experiences such as events, concerts and shows to draw visitors. This sets the brand apart for shoppers, while providing growth opportunities for its retail, entertainment, and hospitality partners.

“When I joined two years ago, I was told, ‘come in and help us enable a connected SmartCenter that allows for maximum engagement and allows not only our consumers, but also our retailers and other brands to connect,’” says Taylor.

Westfield was seeking to better know its customers by collecting data and building user profiles to enable real-time engagement. The organization also wanted to apply these business insights and digital value to attract flagship-level tenants. Westfield was also seeking to digitize its advertising platforms, with location-based digital content delivery across fixed and mobile screens.

“It was kind of a grand experiment for Westfield to take a property that was known as a shopping center and turn it into something far beyond a shopping center,” adds Heather Vandenberghe, CMO of Westfield.

“Westfield is in the entertainment business, much different than just leasing shops. To succeed, we needed to create memorable experiences, getting shoppers to come back again and again. Cisco technology gave us the framework to digitally delight our customers.”

Denise Taylor
CIO, Westfield Corporation

A springboard for innovation

To bring its vision to life, Westfield partnered with Cisco to create a digital-ready foundation for its SmartCenter initiative. The blueprint employs Cisco networking, mobility, analytics, and software solutions to help make the retailer’s IT more agile, and innovation more accessible. The entire solution is based on a Cisco Digital Network Architecture (Cisco DNA™) for retail, which uses automation to simplify network management, analytics to provide customer insights, and embedded security everywhere.

Cisco wireless solutions support a public high-density Wi-Fi network that delivers a premium customer experience. Visitors can enjoy wireless connectivity everywhere and take advantage of applications such as self-service ordering and checkout, as well as easier customer returns. Wayfinding navigation tools help visitors quickly find the retailer, dining, or entertainment for which they are looking. The mall can also engage visitors with event-driven personalized messaging.

To gain better insight into its shoppers and operations, Westfield utilizes
Cisco Connected Mobile Experience (CMX) Advanced analytics. With a better understanding of customer behavior, the mall can enhance the delivery and relevance of ads and promotions, as well as optimize the layout of its tenant locations and its lease rates.

“Now, as visitors log into Wi-Fi, as they engage with our smart parking or with our valet, we are getting closer to that customer and we are able to serve them the information and content that they want,” explains Vandenberghe.

Westfield is also applying its end-to-end SmartCenter environment to non-retail operations such as parking and energy management.

“From the opening of the center at 10:30 in the morning to almost 11 o’clock at night, what we see is different types of traffic and people coming in,” says Taylor. “One of the big complaints we had was a very challenging parking experience. So, we did everything from looking at the physical design to enabling it with technologies such as wayfinding and smart parking: the ability to find your car. We wanted parking to be a non-subject after we rebuilt the center.”

To set itself up for the future, knowing it needs to deploy the SmartCenter solution out to its other flagship properties, Westfield is utilizing the Cisco enterprise agreement. It helps simplify complex licensing, while including an allowance for growth and scalability.

“We couldn’t succeed without the right partners, and Cisco has been just amazing,” says Taylor. “The enterprise agreement has allowed us to be very agile. It’s the building block of how we can future-proof our centers and be able to be nimble and flexible to make adjustments as we need to and as our industry continues to evolve.”

Cisco Advanced Services delivered and documented the Cisco platform to deliver the desired business outcomes.

**From a shopping center to a destination**

Westfield is excited about its ability to define new levels of retail innovation through digitization. The organization is replicating its SmartCenter model and employing it as a blueprint that it can apply it to other properties around the globe.

“This is really the epitome of what the new mall should be,” says Vandenberghe. “Century City is it, and we are trying to take the magic that we have created here and bring it to our other developments. That’s the goal here at Westfield.”

Westfield is expecting a dramatic return on its investment for the multiphase deployment. It projects a 100 percent increase in customer data capture and a 50 percent increase in digital advertising revenues. As
it adds more digital value across its properties, the firm also anticipates a 10 percent increase in tenant revenue.

“What we are trying to deliver, and I think we are succeeding, is in creating a place where everyone wants to come and feel comfortable,” says Vandenberghe. “People are using their Wi-Fi, they are sitting outdoors on the day beds, they are charging up their phones, and they are spending time. As a marketer I want that. The more time they spend, the longer that dwell time and the more money they are also spending on the property. That’s good for our business, and it’s good for our retailers.”

With its SmartCenter vision and an end-to-end data strategy across the entire shopper journey, Westfield is continuing to build a new business model that redefines the mall experience. Through digital transformation and a strong partnership with Cisco, Westfield is disrupting an industry in the midst of change.

For more information
To learn more about how Cisco solutions can help you transform your retail operations, visit www.cisco.com.