

Retailer Introduces Push Marketing on Cloud-Managed Wi-Fi

Customer Case Study



Cisco Meraki wireless solution helps Bencom Retail target customers more effectively in flagship U.K. stores

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Bencom Retail

Industry: Retail

Location: United Kingdom

Number of Employees: 200

Challenge

- Enable push marketing by offering Wi-Fi to shoppers
- Connect employees through secure wireless access
- Add wireless services without increasing complexity

Solution

- Cisco Meraki cloud-managed wireless LAN

Results

- Multiple marketing options enabled
- Separate private network easy to create and operate
- Wireless network simple to set up and manage

Challenge

Mark Bishop is the IT manager for Bencom Retail, which operates the flagship stores of United Colors of Benetton in the United Kingdom. As the company's only IT administrator, he spends most of his time travelling between Benetton stores in London and solving retail IT problems. These tasks include repairing point-of-sale terminals, maintaining electronic equipment for stocktaking, resetting malfunctioning security cameras, and fixing phone systems.

Bishop wanted to offer Wi-Fi to shoppers and provide employees at Benetton UK retail stores with secure wireless network access. "Public access is of interest to us because we're targeting the mobile market," Bishop says. "We're going down the road of push marketing to mobile phones and next-generation devices."

Several stores had routers with wireless capabilities, but Bishop found the infrastructure too difficult to manage. He considered deploying consumer-grade access points, but he felt apprehensive about the lack of security.

Solution

When Activator UK, Bencom's managed service provider, recommended the Cisco® Meraki wireless solution with advanced management and security features, Bishop immediately wanted to try it.

"He really liked the ease of deployment and the cloud management aspect of the Cisco Meraki solution," says Ian Hanson, business development manager at Activator UK. "And the embedded security features allow for secure internal access at the same time as public access, in a way that's much easier to manage than other solutions."



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IT Manager
Benetton UK



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After testing Cisco Meraki MR14 dual-radio 802.11n access points, Bishop deployed the solution across the London flagship stores on Regent Street and in Knightsbridge, as well as at Bencom headquarters and the store on Oxford Street. He installed the units himself.

“It couldn’t have been any easier,” Bishop says. “That’s one reason Cisco Meraki was quite appealing to us. I just plug it in, and it looks after itself. We have much less management on our hands, but we still get the security features and the reporting.”

With one click on the Cisco Meraki dashboard, Bishop created separate SSIDs for the private and public networks. The internal network is secured by Wi-Fi Protected Access (WPA) protocol, so managers with laptops at their stores or franchise owners visiting headquarters can connect to the corporate network easily and securely. The stateful firewall, included in each access point, automatically keeps the traffic separate and blocks shoppers from accessing the private LAN.

Results

The open public network directs users to a Benetton splash page and then on to a Twitter page, and Bishop is working with his public relations team to evaluate other marketing opportunities.

“We want to see the uptake, how many connections we get, and with which types of mobile devices,” he says. “With the Cisco Meraki dashboard, we can see very clearly what types of devices are connecting. The next step is to direct users to our Facebook page or to a promotions or vouchers page. We’re looking to use this technology as another avenue to provide special offers and attract attention.”

In the meantime, Bishop has other priorities alongside wireless management. That’s where features like the Cisco Meraki AutoRF (automatic performance tuning) and summary reports have been invaluable. “I haven’t had a lot of time to dedicate to the network,” he says. “So far I just look at the monthly reports; they make it easy to get the information we need at a glance.”

Bishop praises the centralized management on the Cisco Meraki cloud platform. “What I like about Cisco Meraki is the ease of configuration and distribution,” he says. “I think the dashboard is fantastic, including its analytics and its use of Google maps. I can make all the changes in the dashboard, and the settings automatically populate across our estate.”

For More Information

To find out more about Cisco Meraki Cloud Managed Wireless solutions, please go to www.cisco.com/go/meraki

Product List

Wireless

- Cisco Meraki MR14 Wireless Access Points



Americas Headquarters
Cisco Systems, Inc.
San Jose, CA

Asia Pacific Headquarters
Cisco Systems (USA) Pte. Ltd.
Singapore

Europe Headquarters
Cisco Systems International BV Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

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