

# Retailer Delivers Connected Experience, Improves Service

Customer Case Study



Big-box chain stabilizes network and reduces costs with single-source managed service for thousands of stores.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Customer name:** Top U.S. retailer

**Industry:** Retail

**Location:** More than 2000 stores in North America

### Business Challenge

- Simplify the IT and communications environment to increase operational efficiency and lower cost
- Raise service levels within stores by improving the availability and reliability of the IT infrastructure
- Replace an aging analog communications infrastructure with a converged voice and data network

### Solution

- Provides dedicated 24-hour management of the IT and communications infrastructure, including data, voice, paging, and overhead music
- Delivers custom configurations and reporting from a dedicated management platform
- Establishes a single point of contact for incident and change management and reporting

### Business Results

- Improved network and communications availability for a better and more interconnected customer experience
- Streamlined network and communications operations and reduced costs by as much as 15 percent
- Decreased incident ticket volume by 75 percent by stabilizing the network

## Business Challenge

One of the largest retailers in North America sought to improve the availability and reliability of the data and communications network at its more than 2000 stores. Recognizing that the network was a strategic asset in delivering an interconnected retail experience to its customers and store employees, the company began looking for a way to transform the environment to reduce complexity, streamline management, and improve uptime.

The sheer number of locations made it difficult for the retailer to oversee the entire network and respond to issues quickly. An even greater challenge was the number of vendors involved in supporting various components of the IT and communications environment at the store level. Each vendor pointed a finger at the others when problems arose. As the company grew, this fragmented multivendor approach became costly, inefficient, and detrimental to store service.

Facing a major upgrade of its dated voice infrastructure, the retailer decided the time was right to implement a more holistic end-to-end approach for managing its voice and data communications.

## Solution

Cisco was the only provider with the ability to combine products and services into a managed service solution for the retailer's store infrastructure. Supported by Cisco® Managed Services, the solution provides 24-hour monitoring and management of both Cisco and third-party equipment and services, including incident, problem, and change management; software upgrades; and reporting. Other elements of the solution include a dedicated management platform, a custom voice help desk, and the management of third-party devices such as the paging and overhead music systems.



The new converged infrastructure for voice and data features Cisco routers in each store with Cisco Unified Communications Manager Express embedded in them. Cisco Unity® Express provides the retailer with integrated messaging, voicemail, and more, while the store associates appreciate the user friendliness of their new Cisco Unified IP Phones. Cisco switches, Cisco Wireless LAN Controllers, and Cisco wireless access points complete the network for each store.

Cisco started with a proof-of-concept in two of the retailer's stores, then quickly demonstrated its ability to improve network stability and availability. Soon after, a pilot of 20 stores was launched before a rollout began to most of the other stores. Today Cisco manages the unified communications infrastructure for more than 200,000 phones and 90,000 foundation, wireless, and third-party devices across nearly 2000 store locations.

A significant effort was launched by Cisco Services to improve the retailer's wireless networks, which were in disrepair in many of the stores. Cisco started with an audit to determine the capability and placement of the access points in each store compared with what the original low-level design called for. Through a combination of technician dispatches where necessary and remote remediation where possible, the store's wireless environment was rejuvenated, increasing network availability for both customers and store associates. Cisco now manages and maintains the environment containing over 56,000 wireless access points, with under 20 points out of service at any given time.

### Business Results

Thanks to its advanced audit capabilities, Cisco brought the retailer's network components under central management and stabilized the environment. The audit identified configurations where the environment had strayed outside the planned redundancy design. Cisco has corrected the configurations to protect individual stores from losing connectivity if a device goes down.

By moving from a device-management approach to a holistic store-management model, both the retailer and its customers now benefit from greater availability and reliability of network-enabled services. As part of its connected-retail vision, the company provides customers with free Wi-Fi in the store, delivering far better uptime than before it underwent conversion to Cisco Managed Services. Consumers can use their own devices to locate items inside the store, compare prices, search the inventory at other stores, and more. The result is a substantially improved customer experience.

Now that Cisco is managing the store-level network and communications infrastructure, issues are resolved more quickly and effectively to maintain optimal availability. Incident ticket volume decreased by 75 percent after the new IT environment was stabilized. Cisco reduced the retailer's annual operational costs for the infrastructure by as much 15 percent by simplifying and automating management of the infrastructure. Service fees are now a predictable expense for the IT department.

### Next Steps

The Cisco Managed Services solution was so successful that the retailer asked Cisco to take over the management of network security as well. Cisco Services is in the process of rolling out the Cisco Identity Services Engine and additional Cisco security equipment to all stores under Cisco management. As part of the expanded services deal, Cisco is helping the retailer strengthen network access control, manage policies, and support highly secure bring-your-own-device connectivity.

### More Information

To learn more about Cisco Services, visit [cisco.com/go/services](http://cisco.com/go/services).

### Service List

[Cisco Managed Services](#)

### Product List

- Cisco CallManager Express
- Cisco Unity Express
- Cisco Unified IP Phones
- [Cisco Identity Services Engine](#)
- [Cisco AnyConnect Security Mobility Client](#)
- [Cisco routers](#)
- [Cisco switches](#)
- [Cisco Wireless LAN Controller](#)
- [Cisco wireless access points](#)



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