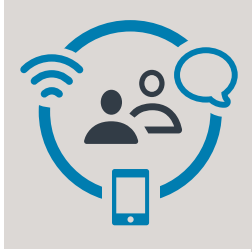




Six Wireless IT Strategies for Delivering Enhanced Shopper Experiences

PREPARING FOR THE RETAIL EXPERIENCE OF THE FUTURE

For the retail IT professional, it's about careful planning of the network to ensure its ability to provide the customer experiences that assure competitive differentiation and sustained advantage. As you prepare to design your wireless network to excel in the new connected retail environment, here are six IT strategies that can help you make the best decisions for your customers, your associates and your bottom line.



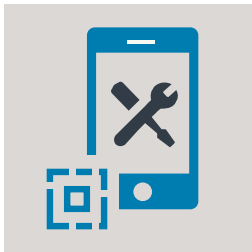
STRATEGY 1:

DEFINE YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

In the new retail environment, the customer experience is everything. It's what keeps your customers satisfied. It's what keeps them coming back. It's what helps them become more loyal and more profitable. It's what convinces them to stay away from your competitors. A retailer's first strategy is to decide what kind of experience you want your customers to have. Critical questions include:

- Do you want shoppers to have Wi-Fi access throughout your store?
- Are you going to design a private smartphone application?
- Do you want your sales associates to have smart devices?
- Will you equip them with voice over your Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN)?
- Is locationing important to you?
- How will you leverage analytics data?

Once you've decided on your optimum shopper experience, you can turn to ensuring that your sales associates and network will be able to deliver.



STRATEGY 2:

IDENTIFY YOUR OPERATIONAL NEEDS

Before planning and deploying your network, you need to identify your communications needs, both for internal operations and for customer assistance. Your needs will typically include systems for supply chain management, including inventory tracking and control, shipping, receiving, stocking shelves, price checking and more. Equally important are customer experience-driven needs such as private application connectivity and empowered sales associates. You should consider whether you need to provide every associate with a mobile device, or whether you should support BYOD (bring your own device), with some or all associates. You should also determine if you want to provide customer information options such as QR codes, mobile coupons, digital catalogs and streaming video.



STRATEGY 3:

DETERMINE YOUR COVERAGE REQUIREMENT

Connected shoppers expect to be able to access their shopping lists and product information on the web. It's crucial that your network is able deliver this access storewide, because if shoppers expect access and can't get it, a positive experience can quickly turn negative. Coverage is crucial, so you need to consider environmental elements, such as large windows, concrete walls and steel construction, which might cause interference and dropped connections. Bandwidth is also critical. Video and other bandwidth-intensive applications can be major competitive advantages, but only if they perform at a high level with low latency and high picture quality. Furthermore, if you're planning to provide VoIP service, you need to ensure that your network is optimized for voice services.



STRATEGY 4: **SELECT YOUR OPTIMUM ARCHITECTURE**

Your network architecture plays a crucial part in achieving the communications and marketing goals of your wireless network. As you work on identifying your operational objectives and determining your coverage requirements, you must make sure you deploy the optimum architecture for achieving your goals. There are a number of issues to address. You should have the option of choosing local or cloud access, especially important for multi-location retailers. Your architecture should have intelligent routing to help you avoid bottlenecks and slow performance during peak periods. Your architecture must support your coverage and bandwidth needs. It should also allow you to easily and cost-effectively add devices and applications as you expand in the future.



STRATEGY 5: **SECURE YOUR NETWORK AND INFORMATION**

Connected consumers understand the issues involved in providing their personal information. Before they hand over their information to you, they want to be confident that it will remain safe and secure. You must make sure your network is compliant with rigorous industry standards, including stringent Payment Card Industry (PCI) security standards as well as with wide-ranging government regulations. You should formulate a comprehensive privacy policy. Decide which security tools will be most important for your network — intrusion prevention, rogue access point detection, authentication, key management, encryption and more — and ensure your network is designed to support all of these requirements.



STRATEGY 6: **CHOOSE THE RIGHT NETWORK MANAGEMENT MODEL**

Wireless networks are becoming more and more crucial to delivering customer sales floor experiences that make a difference. But retail has always been, and continues to be, about margins and the need to reduce cost as much as possible without compromising service and sales. As retailers expand and extend their wireless in-store networks, many are looking closely at the cost — both CAPEX and OPEX — and complexity of managing those networks. That's causing many retailers to consider the use of managed network services to help them reduce total cost of ownership (TCO).

Storewide wireless networks are energizing the sales floor environment, creating more positive customer experiences and increasing sales. But planning, designing, deploying and managing these networks, devices and applications can be challenging, time-consuming and costly. You have to ensure coverage and throughput. You have to collect and analyze customer data. You have to keep your network refreshed and competitive. Most of all, you have to make sure the system works efficiently and effectively for your internal associates, and especially for your customers.

It's not surprising that many retailers are deciding to go the managed network route in order to lower TCO and free up IT resources to focus on strategy. Recognizing that a retailers' primary competency and objective is growing their retail business rather than maintaining technology, these organizations are opting to empower an experienced network management organization to manage their wireless technology, devices and applications. Not just today, but as the network evolves and grows in the future. Through efficient management of network infrastructure, devices and applications, managed network solutions are a proven alternative for reducing CAPEX, OPEX and TCO, and optimizing customer satisfaction and sustaining ongoing profitability.



A Strategic Imperative

In the new retailing world, wireless connectivity on the sales floor has transitioned from being “nice-to-have” to “need-to-have.” Because in today’s hyper-competitive retail marketplace, wireless has become more than a tactical solution. It’s a strategic solution that empowers IT and marketing to build a more engaged, more loyal, more profitable customer base while increasing differentiation and competitive advantage.

A fast-growing number of the savviest retailers are already beginning to take advantage of wireless connectivity, data collection and analysis to make their customers’ shopping experiences more exciting, more satisfying and more personal.

ZEBRA RETAIL LEADERSHIP SERIES

This white paper is one of a series examining the challenges, the opportunities and the realities of how technology innovation is shaping the retail industry.

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