

WiFi and Mobile Computing Specialists

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CASE STUDY: JD Sports



The Challenge

- A nationwide 400 retail store wireless LAN and data capture rollout under tight time-scales.

The Solution

- A Cisco-based wireless LAN consisting of 4 access points, 2 Datalogic Skorpio handheld computers and QLN320 Zebra wireless printer in every store.

The Results

- A successfully managed project as a result of which all JD Sports stores were completed within the agreed deadlines.
- Continued network support ensures the ongoing health of the network with minimal downtime.

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Ensign Delivers a 400-Store Wireless LAN and Data Capture Rollout for UK High-Street Retail Giant

Since its inception in 1981, the Manchester-based JD Group has become one of the UK's most well-known retailers. With numerous high-street fasciae including JD Sports, Chausport, Size?, Bank and Cecil Gee, the JD Group operate out of around 900 stores across the UK and Europe.

Having made a number of retail acquisitions in recent years the retail giant identified a requirement to install wireless network infrastructures within many of their stores. The company approached Ensign to perform a complete network rollout within approximately 400 stores across the UK and Northern Ireland.

Tight Timescales

Due to tight timescales and the considerable size of the JD estate, Ensign were required to complete install in at least two stores per day. Depending on their location - varying from high-street to shopping centre units - the layout of each store presented a fresh set of challenges, which saw Ensign's engineers installing wireless access points and routing fibre cabling throughout often irregular and awkward spaces.



Having to work 'on-the-fly', without floor plans, Ensign surveyed the front and back-of-house areas of each store to ensure the best overall coverage could be achieved - this careful planning would allow the wireless network to provide the strongest and most resilient signal to the handheld mobile devices employed on the shop floor and stockroom areas.

Mobile Data Capture Solution

The JD Group required two handheld mobile computers and one wireless printer to be commissioned within each store. The Datalogic Skorpio handheld mobile computer was suggested by Ensign's technicians for its ergonomic and reliable design, wireless capabilities (Bluetooth and 802.11b/g) and user-friendly interface. The Zebra QLn320 was also selected to provide a rugged, mobile printing unit capable of withstanding the demands of the busy retail environments.

Device Staging Operation

Due to the compressed timescales of this particular project, as well as to add an additional layer security, the Datalogic handheld computers were staged and configured at Ensign's headquarters in Dorset.





Once configured each handset was then assigned to a particular JD store and shipped. This process saved precious time on-site and added another layer of security, with each device having been configured to the specific IP address of its in-store destination.

Comprehensive Network Support

With the initial store WiFi and data capture rollout now completed, Ensign continues to support the JD estate with remote and on-site technical assistance. The service ensures that JD's network is maintained and running at the optimum level at all times, with network downtime kept at an absolute minimum.

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