

WiFi and Mobile Computing Specialists

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CASE STUDY: Sainsbury's

The Sainsbury's logo, consisting of the word "Sainsbury's" in white text on an orange square background.

Ensign Delivers a Nationwide 800-Store Wireless LAN, Automatic Data Capture and Mobile Printing Solution for UK Retail Giant

From humble beginnings in Victorian London, J Sainsbury PLC has grown to become one of the country's most successful retail brands.

Now with over a thousand stores across UK and Northern Ireland, employing in excess of 150,000 employees and reporting a net income of nearly £650 million (2011), the company is going from strength-to-strength.

The Challenge

- To completely design and install a business-grade wireless LAN, data capture and mobile printing solution across an 800-store retail estate.

The Solution

- A robust wireless LAN consisting of over 8000 Cisco 1231G access points supporting approximately 12,000 Intermec 750 handheld computers and 8,000 Toshiba Sp2 mobile printers.

The Results

- A highly successful nationwide network rollout.
- Network support SLAs met at a 95% success rate.

Heavy Investment

After a poor end to the 20th Century, 2004 saw the company re-evaluate their direction as they invested heavily in new distribution, logistics and staffing initiatives. It was at this time the company approached Ensign to provide wireless LAN infrastructures within hundreds of Sainsbury's stores across the British Isles.

With the skills, knowledge and expertise to cope with such high demand, Ensign began work on the project, sending engineers all over the country to perform site surveys on nearly 800 Sainsbury's stores.

Delivering Hardware

In order to keep the project moving at a pace that would ensure the agreed deadlines were met, all of the access points required to provide each store with network coverage were configured at Ensign's head office in Dorset.

In excess of 8000 Cisco 1231G access points were configured over a 12 month period, prior to each set being shipped to designated store when ready. The same system was employed to configure the equally large number of Intermec 750 handheld computers and Toshiba SP2 mobile printing devices, totalling approximately 12,000 and 8,000 respectively.

Onsite Support Services

Once the initial 800 store rollout was complete, Ensign worked with Sainsbury's to provide them with 24/7 on-site support services - taking up-to 60 support calls per month in 2010 and fixing any issues affecting the performance of their UK-wide wireless infrastructure.

In addition to the provision of on-site support, throughout 2010 Ensign provided Sainsbury's with a swap-out and repair service for all of their wireless devices - coordinating anything up-to 1,600 swaps per month. This service ensured that should any of the handhelds or printers suffer a technical fault - a direct replacement would be in-store no later than the next business day.

This support service was so successful that Ensign can boast an overall 95% success rate in meeting the service-level agreements identified by Sainsbury's.

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Project Challenges

When asked about the most challenging aspects of the deployment and subsequent support services, Paul Barrington, Customer Services Manager at Ensign, said: “Our main challenges were in the logistics. Initially, surveying the 800 stores and delivering the configured access points and after that, managing the swap-outs, which were in the thousands each month.

“However, the Ensign team were more than capable of meeting these challenges and I am proud of our achievements.”

Project Completion

After the completion of the original store wireless LAN rollouts, Ensign continued to assist the supermarket chain with on-going technical refreshes - replacing various pieces of hardware and ensuring that the wireless infrastructure remained at the highest level of performance.

Ensign Communications - A Safe Pair of Hands

Ensign Communications is a leading UK enterprise wireless LAN and mobile computing specialist, providing bespoke enterprise wireless network solutions from design, installation and support, to a variety of verticals.

We offer tailored wireless networks to suit every business networking need or requirement, as well as the support and expertise of our highly-trained technical team, to ensure our customers' wireless enterprise has all the tools available to stay ahead of the competition.



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