ascolour.

Executive Summary

Industry

- Clothing and Apparel

Environment

- Global business with distribution centres in New Zealand, Australia, UK and USA
- Moving to high-density storage with automated storage and retrieval
- Introduction of Android tablets and Bluetooth glove scanners

Technology Needs

- High performance wireless networking with ubiquitous coverage in high density warehouse environment
- Automated warehouse environment with reliable network coverage, network security, and access to data
- Consistent and seamless handoff between access points
- Ability to monitor network and device performance at each distribution centre, from a central location

Extreme Solution Components

- ExtremeCloud™ IQ
- Extreme AP510C access points

Results

- Consistent, secure, high-capacity Wi-Fi network ensuring ongoing data connectivity between mobile devices and backend systems
- Network visibility for IT staff based in NZ through a single pane of glass management interface
- A technology blueprint that can be deployed to support any new distribution centre, helping AS Colour achieve its growth objectives

AS Colour Deploys Extreme Cloud-Enabled Wi-Fi 6 Infrastructure to Drive Operational Efficiencies and Competitive Advantage

AS Colour is a designer, manufacturer, and distributor of premium apparel operating as a wholesaler and retailer in New Zealand, Australia, UK and USA. Starting out in New Zealand in 2005 as a supplier of quality basics to be screenprinted as merchandise for concert tours and events, AS Colour now operates from warehouses in Auckland, Melbourne, Los Angeles, and Marlow (near London), a global e-commerce site and an extensive range of retail stores in New Zealand and Australia.

AS Colour embarked on a strategy to support the company's expected growth over the next decade. This path to digital transformation includes more efficient warehouse operations, improved environmental performance, and greater supply chain resilience. With a much higher density warehouse environment, ensuring high-performance Wi-Fi was essential.

"In re-engineering the efficiency and capacity of our global warehouses, a key challenge was making sure the wireless signal was consistent throughout the entire warehouse," said Lawrence Railton, Managing Director, AS Colour.

Extreme Networks upgraded the basic Cisco wireless infrastructure in its Melbourne and Auckland warehouses to a cloud-based Extreme network

infrastructure, comprising AP510C access points supported by the ExtremeCloud IQ management platform. The technology will also be rolled out in the LA and UK facilities.

The Extreme solution is providing AS Colour with a robust, high-capacity, high-efficiency Wi-Fi 6 network to operate seamlessly in a challenging warehouse environment, handling large amounts of data transmitted between mobile devices and AS Colour's backend systems.

One of the key warehouse initiatives AS Colour has introduced is high-density storage, automated storage and retrieval systems, and a reduction in the overall size and power requirements of its warehouses.

AS Colour's new Auckland distribution centre (DC) has moved to this design, together with the deployment of a new Multishuttle Goods-to-Person (GTP) System, which provides high-density tote storage and high-sequenced order picking productivity. The Melbourne, UK and US facilities are set to follow.

"With a smaller warehouse footprint, it's reduced our construction costs by about 30% and we've been able to increase our product storage capacity by about 35%, which drives more revenue and gives us a buffer from any supply chain issues," said Railton.

At the same time, AS Colour has rolled out a new warehouse management system (WMS) supported by the introduction of handheld Android devices for distribution staff, complementing the automated Multishuttle system.

"We've seen increased pick rates of 25-30% as a result."

Lawrence Railton, Managing Director, AS Colour

The Extreme Networks access points' software-defined dual 5 GHz radios ensure high levels of device performance and seamless handover as staff move around the facility.

ExtremeCloud IQ allows the AS Colour IT team based at head office in New Zealand to configure, manage, and secure the Wi-Fi network and each access point internationally from a single dashboard.

"Rather than wait for issues to arise, or expect our warehouse staff to tell us if they are having problems with the network, now our IT team has complete visibility of each access point across our entire global operations from a single-pane-of-glass dashboard. These insights give us increased visibility, flexibility, and scalability across our IT network."

Lawrence Railton, Managing Director, AS Colour

AS Colour has been able to distinguish itself in a highly competitive market with high-quality fit, fabric, and finish of its garments, supported by the efficiency of its supply chain and distribution operations.

"We have multiple time-sensitive sales channels, so running a finely tuned supply chain is mission-critical to our success. The investment in an Extreme Networks cloud managed network infrastructure provides a robust, secure, and reliable foundation for us to efficiently run our global distribution centres. When an order is placed online , we can have it in our WMS within 30 seconds, ready for dispatch and pick up within 10 minutes," said Railton. "Now that's efficient."

AS Colour expects to deploy a cloud network infrastructure when it upgrades its UK and US facilities, and potentially expands into other geographies. It is also considering an upgrade to ExtremeCloud IQ Pilot, providing more advanced management, remediation, and reporting capabilities.

"Extreme Networks has been a really strong technology partner. We see this as a long-term partnership to meet our infrastructure and wireless networking needs," said Railton.