

CASE STUDY: SAVERS



Largest Thrift Store Chain in North America Selects Wireless Retail Solution from Extreme

Background

Savers is the largest for-profit thrift store chain in North America and is a global organization. The company operates more than 300 retail locations under the store names Savers, Value Village, Village des Valeurs in Canada, and Savers Australia. Savers was founded in 1954, and partners with more than 150 charities to collect, deliver and resell donated items, paying these non-profit organizations for all collected goods.

Technology Needs

- Modernize wireless network operations across corporate and retail store locations in the US, Canada, and Australia
- Determine retail solution for greater mobile customer interaction
- Future-proof Wi-Fi network as technology and customer requirements evolve
- Identify cloud Wi-Fi solution with ease-of-installation and intuitive network management

Extreme Solution Components

- ExtremeCloud™ IQ on AWS
- ExtremeWireless™
- ExtremeSwitching™

"We are in the beginning phases of leveraging wireless retail operations and the ways Extreme's solution can open doorways on the business side of the house. We have confidence Extreme's retail features and access points with integrated Bluetooth will help propel our business to the next level and stay ahead of what our customers want. Understanding fully what Wi-Fi means to our customers, and how we can best serve them in the near future, will enable us to make shopping at Savers the best it can be."

Charles Blair, IT Infrastructure Manager, Savers

Savers has expanded and modernized tremendously in the last decade. They added a call center located in El Paso, Texas to offer outsourced services to smaller charity organizations that did not have infrastructure in place to schedule operations like donation pick-ups and trucking operations. They had also expanded their headquarters in Washington and were supporting 10 regional distribution centers and warehouses. With all this growth, the company realized it needed to upgrade and modernize its network infrastructure, as well as enable mobility and mobile operations in its stores.

The IT team recognized that wireless capabilities would bring flexibility and mobility which were crucial for augmenting internal operations, and began to evaluate numerous solution providers. The IT team needed to move away from reliance on the WAN and move toward upgrading to a Wi-Fi solution that would also ensure continuous store operations. While the Savers IT team is comprised of more than 60 staff, the network team has four employees, making an intuitive and feature rich solution essential. Savers worked with Extreme reseller Datec to adopt Extreme as the wireless network standard across all retail stores and corporate operations.

Results

✓ Improved Operational Efficiency

- As a thrift store, Savers processes inventory in a unique manner, both receiving and selling unique products that are processed on-site. Since deploying Extreme, Savers has added mobility to its inventory management process, with its proprietary software operating over the wireless network, greatly impacting productivity and efficiency.
- Streamlined corporate operations including a guest network for visitors at HQ.

📊 Analytics and Insights

- Upgraded wireless infrastructure set the stage for Savers to adopt Bluetooth technology that can provide data and insights into in-store operations and store layout and design

🔧 Simplified Management

- ExtremeCloud IQ on AWS gives flexibility to Savers IT team, allowing them to manage the network remotely and take advantage of RF planning tools when deploying to new sites
- Better network management allowed for more secure deployment at corporate offices. Corporate offices are set up with two separate SSIDs with VLANs on the backend to segment corporate and BYOD devices. At retail locations, the network is set up with one SSID for operations and production devices, and another for corporate users, creating a mirrored corporate experience for visiting employees.

"There is always someone who has the ability to build a better mousetrap. Now Savers team members in our retail locations have the flexibility to brainstorm ways for increased productivity, and can move workstation configurations without additional cost."

Charles Blair, IT Infrastructure Manager, Savers