



City Furniture

Large Furniture Retailer Transforms Customer Experience with Retail Wireless Solution from Aerohive

Challenges

- Comprehensive wireless network across all retail locations with future-proofing and scalable solution
- Ability to manage entire network in the cloud from any location
- Secure and reliable Wi-Fi to best serve and protect customers
- Wireless operations for iPads and warehouse mobile devices

Results

- Enterprise wireless network customized for retail environment and set for future growth and expansion
- Wireless retail capabilities built-in to Aerohive access points for customer insight and engagement with iBeacon technology integration
- Secure solution using PPSK to easily onboard and identify devices
- Supply chain, inventory management, VoIP and POS applications all running over robust Wi-Fi network

About City Furniture

City Furniture, a family-owned company founded by Kevin Koenig in 1971, got its humble beginnings in a garage where Kevin and his brother Keith constructed wood bed frames and built up the business. The company launched as Waterbed City with a modest showroom in Fort Lauderdale, has now grown to 27 locations across the state of Florida, including Naples, Ft. Myers, and Orlando.

The furniture firm offers residential design and export services and sells furniture, mattresses, rugs, and accessories. The company operates stores under the City Furniture and Ashley Furniture HomeStore brands and is the largest furniture retailer in South Florida. Manufacturing, transportation, and distribution centers are located in Mississippi and Tamarac, Florida and the company employs more than 1,500 associates.

The Challenge

Roughly two years ago, City Furniture set a goal to move its Point of Sale (POS) operations and capabilities to mobile tablet devices in order to provide a superior customer experience and to conduct transactions from anywhere in the store. City Furniture engaged with IBM and Apple to rewrite a proprietary POS application with capability for customer engagement, including financing and payment applications. In addition, the company wanted to launch VoIP in order to take calls from iPads from anywhere in the showroom, as well as access CRN tools and radio apps.

In order to accomplish mobility across the company, City Furniture recognized it was imperative to upgrade from its existing Cisco 802.11g network to a solution with greater throughput and 5GHz capability. City Furniture had had a wireless network in place for a

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—Eric Jensen
Infrastructure Manager
City Furniture

very long time, using Wi-Fi for inventory and bar code scanning, but the new POS solution and other operations were going to be mobilized from iPads across the entire company and would require an updated Wi-Fi network.

“A new wireless infrastructure would be a large undertaking for City Furniture and we looked for a solution partner that would really look out for us,” explains Eric Jensen, Infrastructure Manager at City Furniture. “We needed to satisfy immediate requirements in our stores for mobile customer service, and we also needed a solution to carry us into the future.”

The Solution

Like many of its large infrastructure decisions, City Furniture turned to Gartner as it evaluated solutions for an investment of this size. A driving factor was to identify a solution provider that could guarantee and stand by its technology, as well as future-proof evolving technology needs. Gartner helped City Furniture throughout the RFP process to find the ideal wireless solution going forward for the retailer.

After evaluating Cisco, Extreme Networks and Meraki, City Furniture chose Aerohive based on price performance and excellent customer care demonstrated by the Aerohive Professional Services team. Gartner had recommended a certain physical range of coverage and Aerohive lined up with Gartner’s recommendations. Aerohive’s Professional Services team was bar none, from detailed site surveys before deployment, to rolling out the proprietary POS solution, and was deeply committed to the success of the wireless network to ensure everything went smoothly throughout the entire process. City Furniture also worked with Aerohive reseller United Data Technologies for integration and deployment.

City Furniture deployed Aerohive AP250 and AP245X access points, with HiveManager Online for cloud network management. Having operations and warehouses in different states made a cloud-based solution essential and also easy for the IT team to manage from anywhere and reduce the dependence on the VPN. Aerohive AP250 access points are equipped with built-in Bluetooth for iBeacon technology, a key priority for the retailer as it looks to expand technology for targeted customer interaction and insight. The Aerohive AP245X access points are equipped with external antennas to ensure continuous coverage in warehouse operations.

Aerohive’s PPSK feature is set up for each mobile device, giving the IT team more control and ease of management, as well as an enhanced level of security. The company established three SSIDs to segment traffic from iPads, laptops and warehouse functions and operations, which use hand held scanners and pickers for barcode inventory.

The Results

The POS solution for City Furniture is now fully rolled out across the company, and much of the success is attributed to the Aerohive Professional Services team who was instrumental and led the way for design, implementation and post verification throughout the entire deployment.

Salespeople now use iPads to accompany customers as they shop to look up information or offer products that might not be available on the show floor.

A major advantage with the Aerohive solution is the ability to leverage access points with a software selectable dual 5GHz band. This allows all showroom iPads and corporate laptops at City Furniture to utilize the 5GHz frequency with minimal channel congestion and better throughput. With this radio intelligence, City Furniture gains flexibility, better network efficiency and maximized network design.

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In the warehouse and headquarters operations, employees are also taking advantage of increased mobility and enterprise Wi-Fi. Intermec and Motorola devices in warehouses and distribution centers stock tickets and manage inventory with barcode scanners. The combination of wireless devices from DLI and software and applications from HighJump is in place for optimal retail and supply chain operations. As trucks pull into the yard, the network is extended for outdoor access to enable inventory allocation on site.

At headquarters, employees are almost exclusively using laptops, and the corporate call center is in the pilot phase for implementing laptops that will utilize the wireless network. Documentation is becoming increasingly digital and marketing teams can collaborate with large files over Wi-Fi. Overall, the price performance of Aerohive was vastly superior to other competitive solutions. While Cisco urged deploying more than 800 access points across retail stores, Aerohive was able to ensure maximum connectivity with positioning an access point every 5500-square feet, a remarkable difference and in line with Gartner’s recommendation.

Setting up Shop

With a solid infrastructure and wireless foundation in place, the IT team will soon begin to take a look at other ways to leverage wireless technology in its stores and across operations at City Furniture. The team hopes to implement iBeacon technology by next year and will soon begin to dedicate efforts toward this promising emerging technology. City Furniture hopes to be able to best serve and understand its customers, and location apps and resources will allow the company to reach the next level in marketing and promotion for in-store guests.

Guest Wi-Fi will also soon be offered in stores and plans for a visitor interface are underway to greet store patrons. All around, the Aerohive solution has made for a smoother and easier selling process, both on the front and back end, with a robust wireless infrastructure to embrace evolving ways to reach customers in the years to come.



Contact us today to learn how your organization can benefit from Aerohive wireless LAN architecture.

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