



Great Clips[®]

Largest Salon Brand Great Clips Selects Aerohive for Retail Wireless Solution

Challenges

- Urgent requirement to standardize nearly 4,000 hair salons on single enterprise wireless solution
- Mandate to meet increased standards of security, including the shift of liability related to EMV compliance
- Cost-effective solution with ease of management and deployment for global operations

Results

- Deployed branch router solution for secure and segmented solution across nearly 4,000 salons owned by 1,200 franchisees across the U.S. and Canada
- Leveraged Aerohive features to allow greater security and simplified authentication
- Enabled video training for all employees and stylists

About Great Clips

Established in 1982, Great Clips is the world's largest salon brand, growing from a few salons in its beginnings, to more than 3,800 salons today throughout the United States and Canada. With a salon concept that offers its customers convenience with walk-in appointments, flexible hours on evenings and weekends, and the industry's first online check-in service, Great Clips has revolutionized the haircare industry.

The company is 100 percent franchise-owned, with more than 1,200 franchisees employing 35,000 Great Clips stylists, and a goal of opening over 200 new salons per year. Great Clips was the first haircare brand to reach \$1 billion in total annual sales after a decade of same-salon sales growth.

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—Mari Fellrath

Vice President, Business Intelligence & Technology
Great Clips, Inc.

Great Clips has much to be proud of, including its dedication to the communities where salons are located, with a focus on philanthropic and volunteer activities.

The Challenge

Like many companies, Great Clips was facing challenges to meet the new Europay, Mastercard, Visa (EMV) standards ahead of the October 2015 deadline. The company was in the process of planning for a new payment processing solution, and also was concerned about keeping current with technology across thousands of salon locations. As a franchise organization, there are many challenges around technology innovation and deployment, from keeping pace with continued evolution to maintaining security and future proofing investments.

Great Clips began to look at wireless solutions to help meet the requirements for the EMV liability shift and security, as well as scale for future growth and development. It was imperative to find a solution that was cost effective for franchisees and was simple and efficient to implement. A network solution needed to be a non-issue for franchisees and their salon teams, with simplified deployment and management.

At the time, Great Clips had no standardized solution across salons and franchisees had deployed a variety of solutions, from off the shelf SOHO products to enterprise-class networks. The company needed to standardize and unify its infrastructure in order to help ensure security across the entire system.

The Solution

Great Clips began initial considerations for a retail wireless solution several years ago in order to prepare for the impending security and EMV liability shift, along with in-salon technology innovation. The company partnered with The Foundation, an IT services provider and Aerohive reseller that currently administers a variety of IT functions and managed services for Great Clips salons across the United States and Canada.

Matt Woestehoff, Director of Operations at The Foundation, began working with Great Clips to conduct an exhaustive test of several enterprise wireless solutions, including technology from Aerohive, Cisco, Cradlepoint and Meraki. Top criteria included security, Wi-Fi performance, 3G/4G modem failover options, cost of implementation, ability to remotely manage and monitor the network, and support Great Clips future technology direction.

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Great Clips looked at a branch router solution to allow franchisees the ability to maintain existing local ISP relationships, and work with The Foundation on the back end to manage its IT support, leveraging Aerohive features such as security and monitoring and control. Testing began early last year in a small number of salons, and Great Clips has now deployed over 3,500 Aerohive BR200 branch routers across the company. Great Clips uses HiveManager on premise with Virtual HiveManager, which was the ideal solution for global franchise management that requires segmentation for corporate operations.

In addition, Great Clips uses the Aerohive Private Pre-Shared Key (PPSK) feature, which has been highly beneficial for the company. A unique PPSK is assigned to the POS so that it and the associated transaction processing can be separated from other devices. Salons are also currently using iPads for training purposes. The devices are pre-loaded with a PPSK, which is unique to each salon. That way, the iPads are securely provisioned out of the box. In addition, salons may decide to assign PPSKs to network operations devices like in-store cameras or wireless thermostats.

Results

Not only did Great Clips face challenges with upgrading its wireless infrastructure, it needed a solution that was easily deployed and managed across a franchise model. Since choosing Aerohive, the deployment has not only been seamless across all salons, but also enabled Great Clips to provide additional business insight and value for many salon owners.

The Foundation provides a Great Clips web portal where franchisees can purchase Aerohive solutions, and the routers are configured and shipped, set up through DHCP, and seamlessly installed at salon locations, often in under 15 minutes. With the EMV liability shift on October 1, 2015, franchisees shoulder much of the burden for credit card fraud. Great Clips has put in place new Ingenico credit card terminals to provide secure transactions and prepare for EMV acceptance.

“One of the principle drivers for selecting a new wireless solution from Aerohive was to help ensure PCI compliance, address the EMV liability shift, and roll out a unified enterprise wireless infrastructure to all Great Clips salons,” explains Jennifer Huwe, Manager of Salon Technology at Great Clips, Inc. “Aerohive not only provides a secure and robust wireless solution, but the built-in features and capabilities will provide a solid foundation as we expand services across the wireless network.”

Salons can use iPads to access the Great Clips University app for video training modules. iPads are pre-loaded with a PPSK for simplified authentication that is unique to each salon, and iPads are managed at the corporate level through AirWatch, eliminating the need for salon teams to ever need to remember the passwords. Franchisees have onsite managers who may also use iPads for other activities within the salon, and provide training for their stylists to keep up to date on the latest haircuts and trends.

The Aerohive routers also allow salons to provide network access to third party vendors, by adding additional PPSKs for optional functions like security cameras, wireless thermostats or door entry systems, without having any interaction with the point of sale system, nor access to secure information.

Aerohive’s Application Visibility & Control features have provided insight into traffic usage and bandwidth consumption. The IT team can monitor the requirements of credit card transaction processing and video training modules. The Foundation team has been able to use Aerohive reporting tools to negotiate with local ISP providers to ensure salons are getting the correct bandwidth and most value from existing contractual agreements. In addition, the company can gather data for future app development, to ensure lighter weight apps are developed for optimal efficiency.

Greater Wireless Capabilities Ahead

Great Clips continues to deploy Aerohive technology throughout salons and is always evaluating the most economical and secure way to manage wireless in all facilities, not just salon locations.

With a robust wireless infrastructure that meets the needs and demands of retailers, Great Clips is able to move forward on several new and exciting projects that depend on an enterprise-class Wi-Fi network.



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

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