REFRESHING AND REVITALISING GR LANE'S WIRELESS NETWORK

If you've ever reached for a bottle of Olbas Oil to keep cold symptoms at bay, or used Kalms to get a good night's sleep, you're familiar with GR Lane. Over the past 80 years, the family-run healthcare brand has developed some of the most recognisable health and wellbeing products sold in the UK.

lanes HEALTH

Industry
Healthcare Manufacturing

Objective
Refresh the networking environment to support new Wave 2 wireless standards

Approach
Research into the various solutions networking vendors could provide to meet requirements

IT matters
- Integrate new solutions with existing systems
- Ease of deployment
- Simplicity of management

Business matters
- Avoidance of increased costs
- Improved network reliabiliy
- Faster WiFi speeds for end users

CHALLENGE

Developing some of Britain's best-loved medicines requires a huge team effort. To ensure collaboration is at the heart of GR Lane, the pharmaceuticals manufacturer has worked with DTP over the years to ensure its network is ready to empower and connect teams.

With its existing wireless networking platform reaching end of life, GR Lane turned to DTP again for advice on refreshing its networking infrastructure – and making the most of important new networking technologies to further enhance collaboration and productivity.

NEW NETWORK, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

In 2012, GR Lane began its partnership with DTP, acquiring a HP MSM wireless controller and access points – along with consultancy and support. However, five years on, the MSM line was discontinued, leaving GR Lane to look for a replacement system.

Far from just a refresh, GR Lane's IT Manager, Jamie Hamblin, saw an opportunity to make the most of new wireless networking innovations.

"The main driver was to refresh our unsupported wireless network. But there was an opportunity to do things even better this time. In particular, I was excited to deploy wireless equipment that would support new Wave 2 wireless standards."

Jamie and his team began researching different wireless options, testing a range of units, including Dell's Aerohive platform. It was at this point that DTP recommended HP's new Aruba networking range.

INTRODUCING ARUBA

While initial testing of Dell's Aerohive platform was promising, it (and many other platforms GR Lane was looking at) all shared a common barrier: a requirement for cloud-based network controllers.

To upgrade to a cloud-controlled wireless platform, GR Lane would need to rip and replace not only all of its access points, but all of its controller modules as well. This would lead to increased costs that Jamie was hoping to avoid.

After discussing his needs with DTP, Jamie learned about Aruba, a network platform that could operate alongside the existing infrastructure using the Aruba "Instant" mode, while offering a range of powerful Wave 2 access points. And as the Aruba platform would come from HPE and include support from DTP, Jamie knew it would be reliable and backed up with full technical assistance.

"Throughout our partnership with DTP, we've always known that if there was a problem, DTP would be there to fix it. They've always been available and looked after us and our equipment. We knew if we went with Aruba we could count on that level of support. We weren't sure if we'd get the same treatment from Dell if we chose Aerohive."

SIMPLE INSTALL, FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT

After choosing Aruba, Jamie and his team were able to install the new access points themselves. As a completely plug and play device, they did so quickly, without any additional support.

"It was the easiest installation of an enterprise-grade network I've ever had. All we needed was access to the rooms for installation. It was just a case of unplugging the old AP, putting the new one in, and letting the Aruba gear sort itself out. And with different options for ceiling and wall mounts, the installation was quick and worry-free."

Beyond the initial deployment, Jamie has found Aruba's simplicity also extends to updating the access points.

"Firmware updates have also been much easier with Aruba. In the old days we had to manually visit the websites, sort the passwords and upload to the controller. With Aruba, we just log into the virtual controller webpage and it automatically finds and updates to the latest version across all equipment."

FASTER PERFORMANCE FOR ALL USERS

After just a week of testing, the Aruba platform was ready to go live. Since then, both Jamie's team and other users at GR Lane have noticed significant improvements over the legacy wireless network.

"The new Wave 2 features make the network much more reliable, and the AC wireless standard offers much better speeds. This was noticed in particular by our Sales department. They have commented at length about how pleased they are with the speed of the wireless now. Handover has also improved, with no more dropped calls if reps are walking between buildings while on the phone."

The Aruba network platform has also enabled GR Lane to do entirely new things that would have been impossible on its previous MSM system.

"DTP was great at showing us not only the benefits of Aruba, but also how other businesses are using new features of the platform. One example is Bluetooth beacons. We can now put Bluetooth tokens in various company assets and track and manage them as they move around our complex – improving our security and reducing risk."

FOR THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE

While GR Lane went to DTP for advice on current wireless network updates, they were also able to better understand how to futureproof their entire networking infrastructure.

"There were plenty of new features we wanted to have, and between my own research and DTP's, we were able to find the best solution to meet them – and get the support we needed to have true peace of mind. But DTP went a step further and helped us consider how to futureproof both our wired and wireless networks."

DTP recommended security, network and guest management tools, such as Aruba ClearPass, as next steps for GR Lane. After rolling out Aruba and ClearPass, there are plenty of other investments GR Lane is considering for the future:

"DTP has always been really good at keeping us up to date on new technologies coming out and how they can help us achieve our goals. We've talked a lot recently about hyperconvergence solutions like SimpliVity. I look forward to embracing these technologies in the future and receiving the same high quality of support and assistance I've always experienced with DTP."

> "DTP has always been really good at keeping us up to date on new technologies coming out and how they can help us achieve our goals. We've talked a lot recently about hyperconvergence solutions like SimpliVity."

For more information about the capabilities of HPE Aruba solutions, or for a chat about your current networking environment, please call us on 0113 276 0210 or email aruba@dtpgroup.co.uk