Retailer Modernizes Communications

Supermarket firm in Saudi Arabia prepares for growth with integrated unified communications, wireless, and security.

Case Study

Customer Name:	**Abu Harb (Mustahlek Supermarkets)**
Industry:	**Retail**
Location:	**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**
Company Size:	**400+**

Business Impact

- Single communications network reduced internal call costs by 60 percent
- Improved network reliability cut checkout queues by 25-30 percent
- Single network increased staff productivity
- Greater efficiency helped improve customer satisfaction

Business Challenge

Abu Harb is a family-owned business that started as a small grocery store 30 years ago in Mecca, western Saudi Arabia. Today, Abu Harb is one of the region's leading supermarkets, with five stores in Mecca and two in Jeddah, where another two stores are currently being built.

As part of a modernization strategy, Abu Harb was planning to automate its business processes by introducing centralized applications for finance and human resources. Sharing confidential information over the network in this way would require greater security than before. Another aspect of the modernization was to replace wired price-checking devices in the stores with wireless systems.

Business growth was putting a strain on the company's communications systems. The computer network was unreliable, causing the checkouts in the stores to close down during opening hours and increasing customers' queuing time. The company wanted to reduce the high cost of phone calls between its stores, and to make it easier for managers to stay in touch with the business when they were working at home or traveling abroad.

Solution and Results

Abu Harb installed a single Cisco® infrastructure for its computing applications, phone systems, wireless communications, and security. Because the network is so reliable, queues at checkouts have been cut by 25-30 percent, and customer satisfaction has risen. Staff are also more productive; for example, engineers no longer spend two hours each day traveling and fixing problems.

Integrating the paging system with the new phones has made it easier to contact staff on the shop floor, and wireless connections have removed in-store cabling for price-checking devices.

IP telephony has replaced private branch exchanges (PBXs) at headquarters and in three stores, enabling staff in these locations to make phone calls on the internal network at zero cost. Other stores can migrate to IP telephony gradually, because the Cisco solution works with traditional PBXs. Managers now use Cisco IP Communicator software on their laptops to make phone calls when they are off-site.

"We used to pay international call charges when we phoned the office from abroad, but now we are charged at local rates, which are 95 percent cheaper," says Saleh Al Tamimi, owner and IT Manager of Abu Harb. "Internal call costs are down by about 60 percent."

Partner Profile

Cisco partner Al Fuzail specializes in unified communications, wireless, and security networking technologies, all of which were included in the Cisco solution for Abu Harb. Having designed and implemented Abu Harb's new WAN, Al Fuzail then identified issues in the LAN and proposed a blueprint for a LAN based on Cisco technology with virtual LAN options that would improve data security.

"Al Fuzail are an excellent partner for a business like ours. They offered strategic advice and followed it up with practical help such as their excellent, quick-response technical support service."

Saleh Al Tamimi
Owner and IT Manager, Abu Harb (Mustahlek Supermarkets)

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