



The Customer is Always Connected: WLAN and the Future of Retail

Few industries are more dependent on real-time operations than retail, and information and communication technology (ICT) plays a critical role in making each interaction with customers, suppliers, and partners timely, accurate, and valuable. From big box electronics stores, to grocery chains, to specialty clothing outlets, any ICT application that can improve responsiveness and increase profit margins by a fraction of a percentage can mean the difference between success and failure. Increasingly, stores are leveraging wireless LAN (WLAN) as a competitive differentiator to give them such advantages over their rivals.

The range of applications for WLAN is almost as diverse as the retail industry itself, but all come down to some common elements: enabling employee mobility, providing better customer service, and giving critical decision-makers real-time insight into product "life-cycles." In an industry where a single store may carry over 50,000 different products, being able to quickly locate a specific item or know if it is out of stock is critical to ensuring both customer satisfaction, continuity of business operations, and ultimately company brand.

Some of the major ICT applications that a WLAN can enable include:

- **Point of Sale (POS):** Deployment of wireless cash registers and bar code client devices gives customer-facing staff access to inventory and pricing information.
- **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID):** WLAN combined with RFID tags can track products from arrival at distribution centers to final sale and provide real-time inventory information.
- **Customer Assistance:** WLANs support a wide variety of customer assistance technologies including customer self-help kiosks, consumer mobile devices, and personal shopper devices.
- **Voice over Wireless (VoWLAN):** VoWLAN has the potential to significantly increase retail productivity by cutting customer response times and maximizing employee access to managers.

Overcoming Obstacles to Good Customer Service

Pervasive WLAN will drive results (and profits)... assuming it is up to the technology and business challenges unique to the retail setting. The floor of a large store can contain many sources of RF interference, to which the WLAN must be immune, in order to guarantee service to all users, everywhere on premises. Also, a customer who has to wait while a salesperson tries to look up inventory on a slow connection is often an unhappy customer, so the WLAN solution must ensure consistently high communication speeds. And given retailing's perennial profit pressures, the wireless system must scale easily and carry the lowest possible operating cost burden.

Extricom's award-winning WLAN system is uniquely designed to meet these demanding requirements. The Interference-Free™ Architecture enables dramatically easier WLAN deployment and lower total cost of ownership, while achieving a generational leap in capacity, coverage, seamless mobility and security capability. The result is a large-scale WLAN infrastructure delivering campus-wide triple play services, with the dependability of a wired network.



Wireless technology is a key building block in the evolution of the retail industry. The store of the future promises to be one in which WLAN improves the customer experience, boosts employee productivity, and provides management with real-time operational insight. The challenge now is to identify the right solution that can make this promise a reality.



The Extricom Interference-Free™ Architecture
Impressive Performance
Surprising Simplicity
Lowest Cost of Ownership

- Converged Voice, Data, & Video, with Zero-Latency Mobility
- Plug-and-Play Simplicity, with no RF Cell Planning
- Blanket Coverage for Ubiquitous Service without Co-Channel Interference
- Wire-like Connection
- TrueReuse™ Bandwidth
- Multi-Blanket Operation, in One Infrastructure

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Retail Core Requirements

Reliable, Comprehensive Communications

The WLAN solution has to meet high standards of reliability. Connectivity issues will directly impact employee productivity, customer loyalty, and, ultimately, bottom-line profitability.

Support Highly Mobile Workforce with Diverse Operational Needs

The WLAN solution must be able to meet the performance needs of employees who are continually moving throughout the store while staying in constant contact.

Wire-Like VoWLAN

As VoWLAN becomes an increasingly important tool in the retail environment, the quality of communications becomes critical to business operations.

Ease of Installation

The WLAN must be capable of quick installation to meet changing space needs, and must offer ease of administration and management without requiring advanced network certifications or expensive training.

Adaptability to a Changing Environment

The physical layout and shelf contents in stores and distribution centers are constantly changing. The wireless system, once installed, must remain immune to such a dynamic environment.

Extricom's Unique Value

Guaranteed Service

Extricom's technology is the only WLAN technology that can deliver a guaranteed and consistent level of connectivity speed, to all users, everywhere on the property, always.

A Multi-Layer System that Ensures No Performance Trade-offs

Extricom's unique channel blanket infrastructure provides maximum bandwidth, mobility, and coverage to each individual employee – as if they each had a dedicated system of their own.

Zero-Latency, Seamless Mobility

No handoff delays. No dropped calls. Superior voice quality and battery life. This is the Extricom WLAN built for voice over Wi-Fi.

The Lowest Cost of Ownership

Extricom's solution eliminates the cost of RF cell planning and RF staff expertise, seamlessly extends your existing wired network, and is deployed and maintained with plug-and-play simplicity. The bottom line is Total Cost of Ownership that is 50% lower than competing solutions.

Avoid Perpetual "Tuning"

Traditional solutions force IT to constantly readjust and optimize cell planning, channelization, and a host of other traits, as the environment changes. The unique "place-anywhere" AP flexibility of the Extricom WLAN makes such constant retuning a thing of the past.

The Future of Wi-Fi

Major retailers clearly see the importance of Wi-Fi to their business success. The question is: how confident are you that today's WLAN technologies can meet the current and future demands of your environment?

Ask us how retail companies, as well as clients in the healthcare, hospitality, warehousing and enterprise arenas, have succeeded with Extricom. Extricom's Wireless LAN is specifically designed to answer the challenges posed by pervasive Wi-Fi, providing the high-performance, resilient, and future-proof infrastructure required by your retail environment.