

Restaurant Chain Lowers Costs, Increases Bandwidth and Improves Speed to Deployment with CradlePoint Networking Solutions

SUMMARY

This full-service restaurant chain operates more than 1700 restaurants and is a regional cultural icon in the Southern United States. The chain is noted for outstanding customer service and high-quality food offered at reasonable prices. The company prides itself on not being an early adopter: its IT strategy is to let the market develop the best solutions to meet its needs. Such was this company's approach to credit card transaction processing. The company had used dial-up Internet connections for years, waiting for the industry to develop a more flexible, economically viable solution. Because of the geographical diversity of its restaurant locations, the chain needed a solution that could take advantage of the growing cellular network, keep its monthly wireless carrier costs low, was easy to implement, and was compact enough to fit into its restaurants' small footprints.

“When we realized that we could tackle our problem with a cellular-based solution, we reached out to several vendors,” says the restaurant chain's Director of IT. “We narrowed that down to two, and trialed those solutions in the field. Based on ease of configuration, the simplicity of the device, and overall design and capabilities, we chose CradlePoint.”

As the chain rolled out CradlePoint solutions to more than 650 restaurant locations, it began using CradlePoint Enterprise Cloud Manager. This network management platform helps the IT team configure and manage its rapidly expanding network of CradlePoint solutions.

DEPLOYMENT: CradlePoint COR IBR600 Series with 3G/4G LTE, Cloud-Based Networking Management Platform

APPLICATION: CradlePoint delivers flexible high-speed networking using wireless 3G, 4G and LTE broadband; Cloud-based network management enables centralized management, monitoring, and preconfiguration for “zero-touch deployment.”

MARKET: Multi-Location Full-Service Restaurants



COMPANY PROFILE

This company began in the 1950s with a single restaurant in Atlanta, Georgia. It has since grown to more than 1700 locations. The company's distinctive signs are now familiar landmarks along city streets and interstate highways across the United States. The restaurants are located in 25 states and are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

BUSINESS NEEDS

The chain's previous dial-up solution posed two problems: slow credit card transaction speeds, and dependence on a single connectivity solution. In some locations, the company had resorted to installing additional phone lines, but the problems persisted. The company was interested in moving to mobile broadband, but thought it still too expensive. It also considered installing wired Internet access. But the chain's restaurants are designed so efficiently that running the necessary wires and conduits would have been costly and too disruptive. IT knew mobile broadband was the way to go—if it could only find the right solution to meet its needs.

“ Our credit card transaction times were, in the worst case scenario, hovering around 15 seconds of processing time,” the IT Director says. “Even in the worst case, a cellular or broadband solution would reduce that to five or six seconds. That would improve customer satisfaction and enable us to cash out more people.”

SOLUTION

The restaurant chain initially installed CradlePoint COR IBR600 3G wireless routers in its stores. When CradlePoint introduced its COR IBR650 3G/4G LTE devices, the chain began installing this newer model. The devices enable the restaurant locations to quickly establish Internet connectivity via local cellular signal. The devices are easy to deploy and to use, and small enough to fit into tight quarters.

“ With this solution, we can get rid of extra phone line cost. One cellular router will make a single credit card machine run twice as fast as a standalone, so we might even be able to remove one more machine from each store.”

As the restaurant chain continued to install CradlePoint in hundreds of restaurants, it needed a more efficient way to pre-configure and manage the devices. CradlePoint Enterprise Cloud Manager now gives the company's IT staff a single interface to monitor its routers, and vastly streamlines the preconfiguration process for near zero-touch deployment at installation.

“ Before Enterprise Cloud Manager, we'd have to log into each router using a laptop, and then upload the latest firmware and programming changes. That took about 9 to 12 minutes per machine. With this new platform, we can hook up 100 devices at a time and then just walk away. Fifteen minutes later, they're all programmed and ready to go. That saves us a huge amount of staff time.”



BENEFITS

COST SAVINGS

The chain says that it saves significant staff time using CradlePoint Enterprise Cloud Manager to automatically configure each device. The devices themselves are cost efficient. And each restaurant gets all the connectivity it needs with much more affordable cellular plans.

“ *I'm able to get away with ridiculously low monthly carrier costs and still have very quick, very latency friendly communications. The CradlePoint solution comes at such a low cost that it doesn't make sense for us not to use it.”*

EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Because the chain uses cloud management to preconfigure routers before sending them to individual locations, store managers don't need special training to install and enable routers.

“ *The managers plug the devices in, make a credit card machine programming change with their bank, and they're up and running. As soon as they plug it in and light it up, I can check right away in the networking platform to make sure that the device is fully functional.”*

PRIMARY CONNECTION

A growing number of this chain's restaurants now rely on CradlePoint for their primary Internet connectivity, and use the existing dial-up access for back-up. Rarely needed for such support, these phone lines can now be used for call-in orders and other communications.

PCI COMPLIANCE

All companies that accept credit cards must meet Payment Card Industry (PCI) data security standards. The CradlePoint solution is comprised of a singular cellular router on a singular point: there are no other devices connected. This makes it much easier for the chain's internal audit team to confirm that each location meets PCI standards.

“ *The wireless routers make life easier for everybody. You don't have to jump through hoops. You just show the audit team how the routers are configured, and the data transfer process is crystal clear.”*

SOLID FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH

The CradlePoint COR IBR650 with 3G/4G LTE opens the door to many new services that this chain can now offer its customers as it rolls out these new devices to hundreds more of its restaurants. With flexible Internet connectivity at higher access speeds and lower monthly costs, the chain feels like it has a solution it can rely on for years to come.

“ *I don't foresee us trying any other mobile broadband networking solution—just because CradlePoint works,” says the chain's IT Director. “It's incredibly compact and gives me a lot of control over the devices. But as far as our managers out in the field are concerned, it's extremely simple and easy to use.”*