

Background

As part of a quarterly review Marks and Spencer held a retail conference for store managers and head office staff in July 2013 at the Business Design Centre, Islington. The eight hundred delegates in attendance were encouraged to give real time feedback throughout the duration of the conference using the enterprise social network site Yammer.



In order for all delegates to be able to login and contribute to the discussions taking place on Yammer Wi-Fi access, which could support up to 800 concurrent users at any given time, was needed.

Marks and Spencer therefore needed a robust, self-healing and self contained wireless infrastructure that provided industry standards based 802.11.a/n &b/g Wi-Fi connectivity. The Samsung Wireless Enterprise WLAN solution was the perfect fit.

The Solution

The Business Design Centre already had an existing 3rd party WLAN solution consisting of over 50 access points spread throughout the building in a dense deployment. However, the network only had capacity for 500 users across the entire building and consequently was not capable of accommodating access for all conference delegates.



In addition to the existing corporate Wi-Fi solution a vast majority of the retail premises on the atrium overlooking the mezzanine floor (where the conference took place) had their own 3rd party wireless networks. All of which led to a very congested RF environment.

To overcome such a challenging environment Samsung engineers had to design the wireless network so that co-channel interference with the Samsung Access Points (APs) would be avoided as well as avoiding interference from the incumbent wireless solution.

To that end Samsung provided 10 dual-band 2x2x2 MiMo APs (in order to provide the bandwidth capacity required for 800 concurrent users) with reduced transmit powers to a minimum, to limit their individual coverage areas and let the Samsung AP Self-Organising Network (SON) feature balance the APs channel assignment.

Benefits of the Solution

The Samsung Wireless Enterprise WLAN solution successfully provided a strong, consistent service to delegates for the duration of the conference, with no disruption. The live Yammer feed was shown on the main presentation screen at times throughout the day which allowed delegate's feedback to be incorporated into the conference. Without a strong Wi-Fi network this would not have been possible.

Both delegates and Marks and Spencer were pleased with the service provided, which has been reinforced by the request from Marks and Spencer for Samsung to deploy the Samsung Wireless Enterprise WLAN at future conferences.

Alex Semel, Retail Communication Roadmap Manager at Marks & Spencer commented:

"Yammer is a new initiative to M&S and this conference was the first time we used the site to gather feedback from delegates during the conference.

A secure, fast and trouble free Wi-Fi was the key to making the use of Yammer a success, and the Samsung Wi-Fi solution delivered this. The service worked really well and feedback among delegates regarding the coverage was very positive. We will definitely be using the Samsung Wi-Fi solution at our next conference."

