

DG Lifestyle Stores Deliver the Fullest Apple Shopping Experience with Smart Wi-Fi

Walk into any DG Lifestyle stores and you are immediately struck by the clean lines, blond woods and large expanse of whiteness. This visually spare layout is designed above all to emphasize the products, which are neatly laid out and ready for hands-on use. Visitors are at their liberty to create something and get a feel for the hardware and software and how it interacts.

Such design doesn't come about by accident, but involves meticulous planning and adherence to a strict set of rules. Of critical importance in supporting this is a reliable, high performance Wi-Fi setup that can unobtrusively showcase the full capabilities of every iPad, MacBook, iPhone, iPod and iMac system on display.



DG Lifestyle stores deploy Smart Wi-Fi to run Apple product demos and retail operation applications across all 9 stores in Hong Kong

So when DG Lifestyle Store, Asia's largest Apple reseller, decided to revamp the internal networks in its nine Hong Kong stores, it quickly turned to Ruckus Wireless and its Smart Wi-Fi solution.

Smart Wi-Fi integrates Ruckus patented BeamFlex™ smart antenna technology to deliver a consistent, high performance, extended wireless coverage and multimedia support as it automatically tunes itself to adapt to constant changes in the environment.

"Each outlet runs 8-9 Apple product demos concurrently on the various display equipment in store," said Dennis Ng, Manager of Sales & Marketing, DG Lifestyle Store. "These include Apple videos, YouTube clips, and downloads to demonstrate the smooth running of the Apple laptops and other devices. It's imperative from a sales point of view that they run smoothly and glitch-free."

DG Lifestyle started selling Apple computers in 1994 and in 1999 was named the first Apple Centre in the Asia Pacific. It has won a slew of awards including World Wide Best Apple Centre in 2000, Apple Best Sales Performance, Best Apple Identity Award, Best Apple Store Performance and Best Apple Marketing Effort. The company is one Apple's most loyal resellers globally and is now one of the two Apple Premium Resellers in Hong Kong.

Ng said also that the Ruckus Wireless system matched well with the strict guidelines laid out by Apple in shop design. "The system is completely unobtrusive and is highly effective," he said.

Apple's decision to open retail shop in 2001 was based on the desire better control the customer retail experience and attracts new customers. Shops are designed to simplify and enhance the presentation and marketing of personal computing products.

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Founded in Hong Kong in 1994, DG Lifestyle Store is Asia's largest reseller of Apple products. The company operates 15 stores across the region and is the first Apple premium reseller to operate across three markets—Hong Kong, Singapore and China. It was named the "Worldwide Best Apple Center" in 2000.

REQUIREMENTS

- Establish secure, unobtrusive Wi-Fi coverage across nine Hong Kong retail stores
- Support clean architectural image of each store in accordance with Apple guidelines
- Network to be used to demonstrate applications across a range of Apple devices including iPad, MacBook Pro, iPhone and iMac systems
- Wi-Fi network also to be used for Point of Sales Application, stock checking and in-store CCTV security system
- Smooth performance required in busy malls where there is a lot of interference from other commercial Wi-Fi devices

SOLUTION

- Nine stores ranging from 600 to 2000 square feet in size
- Each store equipped with one Ruckus 7300 Series Access Point
- Linked to headquarters office and a central ZoneDirector 1000 Smart WLAN Controller

BENEFITS

- Highly stable network that can easily cope with peak weekend shopping days
- Fast setup from start to completion in 4 weeks
- Wi-Fi signal much stronger and more stable than previous in-store set-up
- Demonstrations on Apple products run smooth and glitch-free
- All stores can be centrally managed



Established Since 1994

BEIJING • HONG KONG • SINGAPORE • MACAU

Retail

“The Ruckus Wireless system matched well with the strict guidelines laid out by Apple in store design. The system is completely unobtrusive and is highly effective.”

Dennis Ng

Manager of Sales and Marketing
DG Lifestyle Store

Wi-Fi access in each shop is provided by a single Ruckus 7300 series Access Point (AP) located in a secure storeroom. Each AP is capable of serving an area up to 2,000 square feet and up to 20 clients at the same time. The set-up can place very high demands on the network during busy shopping days, such as Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

Apple shop guidelines, dictate that an open Airport network be available for visitors to bring in their laptops to browse, download email and also troubleshoot any applications. Staff are also on hand to provide technical support at the Genius Bar through the network. Therefore, DG Lifestyle stores also deploy guest access services thru the Ruckus system.

Aside from the above, the Ruckus Wi-Fi system provides a comprehensive shop surveillance system to ensure no Apple demonstration devices are removed from the premises or other merchandise are taken. Surveillance cameras at each store record are set up to record the stores and all videos are sent back to the storage servers located in the head office in Admiralty. In addition, the Wi-Fi network currently also runs point of services applications such as payment, credit card verification and stock checking.

A key challenge for DG Stores was how to achieve broad, high-performance network coverage in busy malls and areas where there is a lot of interference from other commercial Wi-Fi devices.

“Our ultimate goal is to deliver business-class wireless services and bring a superior user experience while reducing the cost of network infrastructure, operation and maintenance,” said Ng.

Before turning to Ruckus, DG Lifestyle used a variety of products from other vendors but these proved to be not that stable, with POS applications disconnecting and the network suffering interference from neighbouring mall shops.

“We selected Ruckus because their RF signal is much stronger and more stable, and particularly suitable to busy shopping environments such as those found in Hong Kong. Walls are a big challenge here,” said Ng.

“The service is very good, performance stable and return on investment is high. Ruckus products are very durable. We are frequently asked by customers who supplies our network equipment and we have no hesitation in recommending Ruckus,” he added.

Ruckus’ patented “Smart Wi-Fi” antenna array technology with complete RF management, focuses RF signals on the client to reduce co-channel interference between access points, balance loads on APs and boost signal coverage. The technology significantly reduces the number of APs in deployment and lowers the cost of ownership.

Deployment of the network involved a team of Ruckus staff and installation took around four weeks. A web-based wizard allows any computer user to configure the APs through the ZoneDirector Smart controller — creating a secure and sophisticated WLAN in a matter of minutes. For video surveillance, four IP cameras are installed in each store and a real time video recording service is utilised.

The Hong Kong stores are centrally connected to form a single network linked to DG Lifestyle headquarters in Admiralty, Hong Kong. A ZoneDirector Smart Wi-Fi controller management system is used for managing all the in-store access-points centrally.

Based on the success of the Hong Kong Wi-Fi deployment DG Lifestyle is actively looking at rolling it out to other Apple shops in other markets. The company operates three stores in Singapore, two in Beijing and one in Macau at the Venetian Macao-Resort-Hotel. The company was the first Apple Premium reseller to operate across three countries in the Asia Pacific and was previously awarded “World-wide Best Apple Centre.”

