

CASE STUDY

DELIVERING SEAMLESS WIRELESS COVERAGE THROUGHOUT EVERY STORE TO SUPPORT DIGITAL ENGAGEMENTS



Asda is a UK supermarket retailer, based in Leeds. The business serves more than 18 million customers a week; it is the UK's third largest supermarket business, with a market share of around 15%.

It competes in an extremely dynamic market, with the sector in a constant state of innovation. In recent years supermarkets have adapted to convenience formats, online, own label, low-cost entrants and a diversified product offering, from clothing to homewares.

Despite this, cost, choice and convenience remain the key drivers. In an increasingly digital world, Asda's goal is to make sure its physical stores are as efficient and effective as possible.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF WIRELESS IN A MODERN RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

An effective instore wireless network is critical. Modern retail relies on accurate stock-taking and just-in-time deliveries, all of which are managed from wireless devices. Asda wanted to upgrade the wireless coverage in all 651 UK stores, removing any blackspots in front of house and the back office.



REQUIREMENTS

- Establish reliable wireless coverage in all UK stores
- Plan and complete the roll-out with no disruption to customer services

SOLUTION

- 802.11ac Aruba indoor & outdoor wireless Instant APs
- AirWave Network Management

OUTCOMES

- Ensures seamless wireless connectivity throughout 651 UK stores, front of house and back office
- Mammoth project delivered on time and ahead of budget, with installation in 60 stores per week
- Eliminates connectivity blackspots to ensure consistent performance of mobile devices
- Optimised performance of 18,300 Aruba access points, through Aruba AirWave Network Management

“ No two stores are the same. We have a mix of purpose built and acquired, but we've delivered this project on time and slightly under budget. More importantly, we have a wireless experience that our users are pleased with. ”

IAN SCHOLES
SENIOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME &
PORTFOLIO MANAGER, ASDA

Starting in late 2017 and running through 2018, the business has overhauled every store in the UK. The programme involves the deployment of more than 18,300 Aruba Instant Access Points, both indoor and outdoor, managed through the Aruba AirWave Network Management platform. The roll out involved a team of 400 engineers working on up to 60 stores a week.

UNINTERRUPTED COVERAGE, FROM FRONT OF HOUSE TO THE BACK OFFICE

Today, there is seamless wireless coverage in every Asda store. Thanks to Asda's design, and tuned through Air-

Wave, there are no blackspots. Devices and applications run smoothly wherever they are needed, either front of house, in the warehouse or at the loading bay.

“We have 10-15 Aruba access points in smaller stores, and 60-70 in larger sites. One Aruba access point acts as the master for all others on site,” says Ian Scholes, Senior Infrastructure Programme & Portfolio manager, Asda. “As part of the project sign-off, using AirWave we have a coverage heatmap for every store. Colleagues might not notice improvements in speed, but they will see there is no interruption to coverage.”

This supports a range of use-cases. Store general managers can access corporate systems on the shop floor, stock-taking and mark-downs can be managed through a wireless device and stock deliveries are scanned and checked on arrival. Click-and-collect customers are recognised automatically, with an Asda staff member taking orders out to their car where they're signed for digitally. Customers, too, can access free Wi-Fi in store.

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