

U.S. Grocery Chain Deploys Air Magnet Enterprise to Support PCI Compliance Efforts

AME Sensors Scan Around the Clock for Potential Causes of Wireless Service Degradation

Business Challenge

- Lacked tools to secure wireless networks in numerous store locations in order to comply with PCI DSS and Sarbanes-Oxley regulations
- Failure to comply carried the risk of millions of dollars in fines
- Vulnerabilities to wireless network as result of a rogue access point could expose customer cell phones to the risk of being hacked and personal data stolen

NETSCOUT Solution

- Air Magnet Enterprise sensors deployed in more than a thousand stores
- Alarms configured to alert if a rogue access point is detected
- Sensors scanned 24x7 for potential causes of wireless service degradation, including channel interference, unauthorized clients, and other causes

Business Value

- Mitigated business risk by helping company become compliant with PCI DSS mandate
- Secured wireless networks in more than a thousand stores to provide exceptional in-store customer experiences
- Increased productivity of IT staff enabling two employees to do the work of ten, and minimized travel requirements to remote stores



Customer Profile

Based in the U.S., this large grocery chain has more than a thousand convenient store locations spread across ten Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic states. Employing more than 65,000 employees, the grocer is known for its customized products and services offered at highly competitive prices. Due to its convenience and attention to customer care, more than ten million consumers a week frequent their locations.

Business Challenge

Quality, customized products, convenient locations, and enjoyable shopping experiences are all cornerstones for the over 50 year old grocery store chain. Behind the scenes, they maintain equally high standards when it comes to being compliant with government regulations. Today's shoppers have embraced the Internet of Things and often use their cell phones for on-line store applications, shopping lists, and/or coupon apps that all depend on in-store wifi to operate.

The IT team was under tremendous pressure to secure and protect the wireless infrastructure across thousands of stores and ensure compliance with Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) and Sarbanes-Oxley regulations. Existing in-house wireless tools simply lacked the capabilities that would enable IT to comply with these stringent rules. Adding to the challenge, failure to meet PCI DSS mandates carried the risk of millions of dollars in fines, not to mention the potential of damaging the grocer's highly respected brand.

Last, but certainly not least, the company wanted to secure their wireless networks against rogue access points to protect customer cell phones from the risk of being hacked or having personal data stolen. Beyond exposure to hacking, the company required service assurance for its network in order to ensure that wireless intrusion protection and detection systems were constantly connected. Also, IT needed remote troubleshooting capabilities because flying personnel to distant locations wasn't always feasible or cost-effective.

NETSCOUT Solution

To assure wireless integrity and PCI DSS compliance of the grocer's wireless network, the IT team turned to NETSCOUT's Air Magnet. Air Magnet Enterprise sensors were deployed in more than a thousand of the company's stores. This solution is a comprehensive 24x7 Performance Monitoring & Wireless Intrusion Detection system (WIDS) / Prevention System (WIPS) that satisfied the security, performance and compliance demands of the grocer's expansive business.

NETSCOUT Solution in Action

With one sensor per store, agnostic to the wifi vendor, Air Magnet Enterprise system scans around the clock for potential causes of wireless service degradation, including channel interference, unauthorized clients, and other causes. Alarms are configured to alert IT if a rogue access point is detected, allowing the team to take decisive action to halt any intrusion before it grows and evolves into a damaging breach.

Business Value

Deployed in more than a thousand of the grocer's stores, the Air Magnet Enterprise sensors enabled the company to assure the security of its wireless networks. This allowed the IT team to mitigate business risk, ensuring full compliance with PCI DSS regulations – saving the business \$1 million in potential fines per incident.

The Air Magnet Enterprise solution also increased productivity of IT staff by allowing remote troubleshooting of wireless performance issues in disparate store locations, thus dramatically reducing the instances that required travel to stores to isolate problems and restore service. This solution has proven to be a significant “force multiplier” for the company, enabling two IT employees to do the work of ten.

In addition, the Air Magnet Enterprise solution has helped to protect the grocery chain's numerous stores from rogue intrusions over the wireless network, which in turn protects customers from having personal data stolen. Ultimately, wifi availability has fast become a necessity for most of the stores' patrons and adding this layer of security and performance protection is simply an extension of providing an exceptional customer experience.



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