

Global Communications Provider Assures Quality End-User Experience in Retail Stores with NETSCOUT

World-class Visibility and Quick Time to Value with nGeniusONE, nGeniusPULSE, and nVaaS

OVERVIEW

The Challenge

- Visibility into end-user experience from the retail stores
- Maintain swift access to CRM, POS and credit card authorization for sales associates at stores

The Solution

- nGenius®PULSE and nPoints
- nGeniusONE® Service Assurance Solution and ISNG appliances

The Results

- Assured quality user experience and revenue opportunities with proactive use of nGeniusPULSE ahead of new product launch
 - Reducing MTTR when troubleshooting issues involving retail stores
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Customer Profile

This Fortune 50 company is a US-based global communications service provider and is one of the largest, most-demanding corporations in the world. More than 100,000 employees support millions of customers, helping the company generate in excess of \$100B in revenue annually.

Part of delivering its network involves this operator's retail stores, which are used for marketing phones, tablets, accessories, as well as cellular phone service and long-term contracts. They have more than 1,000 brick-and-mortar locations in high-traffic areas to capture the attention of their customer base. Successful sales of mobile phones, along with lucrative monthly contracts in a highly competitive market depends, in part, on delivering the highest-quality experience to its guests. Thus, the network used by the sales associates for quick access to customer records and calling plans must perform seamlessly. And if it is noticeably slow, not only is a sales opportunity at risk, there is the potential that it will damage the operator's reputation, which is why the retail network is a top priority!

The Challenge

Despite a strong Web presence, customers still like to go to the stores, "touch" the products, and ask questions before making their purchases. Sales associates are available throughout the store with expertise to answer most questions and leverage hand-held devices for additional research and purchases. The communications provider's IT organization has implemented Wi-Fi networks in each of the retail stores for the express purpose of providing connectivity for the sales associates to access Customer Resource Management (CRM) information for consumers coming to the stores; point-of-sale (POS) details for available products and services to sell; Internet access to track competitive offers and access other cloud-based applications; and connectivity to external sites for credit card authorization when completing a sale.

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For more information about NETSCOUT nGeniusPULSE solutions, please visit:

<https://www.netscout.com/product/ngeniuspulse>

Customers' time in the store must be informative and efficient. If they are stalled or delayed either waiting to speak with a sales associate or executing a potential purchase, they may decide to go to another retailer for that purchase. It is therefore imperative that at all steps of the purchasing cycle, there are no delays or disruptions for the sales associates over the Wi-Fi networks. The company needed cost-effective visibility into end-user experience at their retail stores for both Wi-Fi and wired access to ensure quality was maintained.

Solution in Action

The communications company was a long-standing customer of NETSCOUT, having deployed nGeniusONE Service Assurance platform with InfiniStreamNG appliances throughout regional data centers. The team in network operations turned once again to NETSCOUT to explore ways to gain visibility from the retail store locations. After careful evaluations, they selected nGeniusPULSE for assuring high-quality business service delivery monitoring from remote sites.

Several capabilities that are integral to nGeniusPULSE made it the best choice for this NOC team to meet the needs of their performance management of end-user experience at the retail stores.

- nGeniusPULSE uses active, synthetic tests to verify the availability and performance of the company's critical applications and services – anytime, from anywhere, for any application. In this case, they are testing their CRM, POS, and credit card authorization services, among others, from the retail stores, over both the Wi-Fi and Ethernet technologies. And they are doing so even when the stores are not open in order to stay ahead of degradations and outages as they emerge.
- nGeniusPULSE offers both availability and performance testing. Regular synthetic tests verify that the stores can reach their Web portals, CRM app, and credit card authorization sites. They are also tracking and trending specific transactions to ensure the overall performance of the applications are meeting needs, expectations, and SLAs that may be in place. The Business

Transaction Testing (BTT) capability in nGeniusPULSE allows for specific functions, from log-in to log-out, for key business applications to be initiated that ensure all components of the application are operating as expected and help with identifying performance problems.

- nGeniusPULSE provides an ease of use with seamless integration and direct drilldowns from nGeniusONE, already in use in their data centers. When troubleshooting infrastructure issues, these contextual drill-downs are helping the NOC team to quickly pinpoint exactly where a problem is and assign appropriate resources for resolution.

Although still in the early stages of deployment across their hundreds of retail locations, the company has already solved issues using nGeniusPULSE.

- On the day of a new product launch, the NOC staff came in early to ensure the stores were technically ready to handle the activity expected for the day. They looked at the dashboard for nGeniusPULSE and saw the nPoints were showing a clear and immediate view of a major issue affecting an entire region. The team isolated the problem to a particular third-party server that they were able to get corrected ahead of the store openings, avoiding major issues for the sales associates later that day.
- In another situation, a store in one of the major regions was complaining that one of their application's performance was degrading – slowing down. In comparing the Business Transaction Tests from this store to others, NOC saw the performance was indeed much slower. Breaking down the transmission path, they were able to see it was taking a different path to get to the application service in the data center than the other stores. Correcting this routing mistake quickly restored the appropriate responsiveness to this store.
- In certain situations, sales associates at some retail locations were experiencing poor performance and nGeniusPULSE was used to help pinpoint the problems that were often related to configuration issues in their environment. Quick corrections of the configuration issues restored quality service.

Looking at the examples of issues uncovered using nGeniusPULSE demonstrates its versatility and capabilities to help ensure quality customer and employee experience in the retail locations.

The Results

The communications company is in the business of facilitating critical day-to-day interactions for people and businesses and anything that impedes that goal needs to be avoided or rapidly eradicated. They long ago recognized the need for visibility that impacted broad communities by monitoring their data centers with nGeniusONE and ISNG appliances. Recognizing issues emanate in the individual retail stores or across a community or region of stores, they had the forethought to incorporate visibility there as well in the form of nGeniusPULSE nPoints.

The value here so far is two-fold – first, in a proactive manner, preventing a poor end-user experience. nGeniusPULSE revealed a problem with access to an application server early enough for correction prior to a major launch of a new product that would have impacted customer experience and sales associates' productivity across a region, revenue for the new product, as well as potential negative damage to the reputation of the communications company. Secondly, in reactive troubleshooting, the company is reducing overall mean-time-to-restore (MTTR) quality user experience to the retail stores with swift identification of problems.

From a big-picture standpoint, this company also benefits from an integrated solution, covering application performance and end-user experience in a customer impacting network – all from a single vendor. This extends the value of the investment they made in their original nGeniusONE deployment and reduces complexity and costs in vendor management.

For a business that has a reputation for delivering quality communications services as a cornerstone of their success, this company is taking it to the next level with end-user experience visibility from NETSCOUT.



Corporate Headquarters

NETSCOUT Systems, Inc.
Westford, MA 01886-4105
Phone: +1 978-614-4000
www.netscout.com

Sales Information

Toll Free US: 800-309-4804
(International numbers below)

Product Support

Toll Free US: 888-357-7667
(International numbers below)

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