

Hart Systems, LLC Looks to CradlePoint for Flexible Network to Connect Inventory Solutions



SUMMARY

Hart Systems is a leading provider of technology-driven physical inventory management solutions to the global retail industry. A key part of their solution is real-time, web-based reporting. But because there is no single standard for how individual retail stores across the globe connect to the Internet, one of Hart's biggest IT challenges has been finding a single technology that works for every client. The technology must also be flexible enough to work with varying numbers of Honeywell hand-held wireless scanners (Hart's scanner of choice). It must be simple enough for store employees to use with minimal training. And it must keep pace with rapidly evolving Internet access methodologies.

After much research, Hart found that the one device that meets all of its requirements is the CradlePoint MBR1400 Mission-Critical Branch Router. Its scalability, ease of use, cost-effectiveness, and reliability have made it the backbone of Hart System's inventory solution.

"We're winning business left and right, so that's the proof of the pudding," says Hart Systems' solution architect Thomas Rizzo. "The Hart solution with the Honeywell scanner and the CradlePoint router has really been delivering for us and our clients."

Solution: CradlePoint MBR1400 Mission-Critical Branch Router

Application: CradlePoint delivers instant networking using Internet connectivity from traditional wired options such as cable, DSL, or T1, or through wireless 3G/4G broadband.

Market: Retail

COMPANY PROFILE

Hart Systems' custom inventory solutions support hundreds of clients in more than 35 countries. They lead the industry by providing highly accurate, wireless scanner connectivity using customized, user-friendly software, real-time, web-based reporting, and 24/7 in-house support. Hart's omni-directional, image-reader technology boosts accuracy and reduces read time for every scan, providing scanning productivity increases in excess of 50 percent.

Unlike their competition, Hart Systems designs inventory solutions to be used by in-store employees rather than by specially trained contractors. Real-time inventory event data transfer gives their clients' management teams an eye on inventory results as the event unfolds in one store or across the entire chain, whether in the U.S. or at locations around the world.



BUSINESS NEEDS

The data collected during a physical inventory is critical to business planning. But it can be very challenging to collect. At its most difficult, an inventory event requires hours of IT preparation, in-store set up, contract labor acquisition, and store employee training.

Or, as is the case with Hart System's clients, it can be very simple.

"If you looked at the QuickStart guide we hand out to the client, it's pretty simple: Plug in the access point, make sure all your lights come on, turn your scanner on, scan your control ID to associate the scanner to that device, and start scanning."

SOLUTION

The CradlePoint MBR1400 Mission-Critical Branch Router enables Hart to deliver its solution via traditional wired options or wireless broadband. If the store is very large, or if other environmental features make it difficult to support scanners throughout the store, the staff can put two or more CradlePoint MBR1400 routers into a mesh configuration to increase coverage. And they can pre-configure each router to communicate flawlessly with more than 100 wireless scanners.

BENEFITS

Flexibility

The fact that CradlePoint technology is so flexible means that Hart Systems doesn't need to implement and support solutions using multiple vendors. Whether the retailer's in-store system is legacy or state of the art, hard wired or wireless, Hart can provide one simple solution.

"What really impressed us are the business opportunities we've gained thanks to the flexibility of CradlePoint devices. We feel we can support most any retail environment because we're not limited by how the store gets online. CradlePoint can do it all."

Ease of Use

The technical acumen of retail store staff can vary a great

deal. Managers and employees may be fresh out of college and accustomed to technology. Or they may be highly experienced in sales, but not comfortable with technology and have greater anxiety about using digital devices. The easier the technology is to implement and to use, the happier Hart's clients.

"CradlePoint pre-configures its equipment. Then our logistics team ships it to our customers. All our customers have to do is plug it in, turn it on, and start taking inventory. The MBR1400 is totally plug-and-play, whether there's wired Internet access or not."

Speed and Security

Some inventory solutions require vendors to plug directly into a retail location's Ethernet port. This can mean a lot of work for the retailer's IT staff. And it can jeopardize data security. The CradlePoint MBR1400 can create a Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN) that is completely separate and secure from other in-store systems, including point-of-sale.

"Recently, a client wanted us to use their Ethernet. They said it would take two months to set it up, but they had to complete the inventory in two weeks. As an interim solution, we put a CradlePoint MBR1400 branch router and some scanners in a box, sent it to them and, boom, they were ready to go. They liked the performance and speed to deployment so much they removed the requirement to use the Ethernet."

Global Reach

Hart Systems provides inventory solutions to companies all over the world. To meet its needs, CradlePoint has to make sure that its works with carriers worldwide.

"It seems like every time you turn around, telecom companies, especially in Europe, are releasing a new type of USB or cellular card. CradlePoint's doing a great job—definitely better than any other company I've come across—in keeping current in terms of supporting new connectivity as technologies advance."