Cedenco Foods Selects Fortinet Access Points for Major Expansion

To provide wifi coverage in their new NZ$6 million produce processing facility and increase signal strength within their existing adjacent factory, Cedenco Foods selected an array of Fortinet FortiAP 222B Access Points. “We wanted wider coverage, trouble-free operations and affordability,” says Cleon Pinto, Information Technology Manager at Cedenco Foods. “In addition, we had existing infrastructure, including a FortiGate 110C UTM Appliance, that we wanted to leverage. When we looked at all of the options, Fujitsu’s recommendation that we standardise with Fortinet access points was the most advantageous choice.”

Working Smarter
Cedenco Foods, Gisborne-based producers of food ingredients such as pastes, powders and purees from locally-grown fresh fruit and vegetables, has been upgrading their operations as part of their overall growth strategy. With more produce passing through the facility, more overseas and domestic sales and an anticipated 100 new seasonal positions, Cedenco has been developing ways to work smarter. One tactic is investing in new technology.

Details
Customer Name: Cedenco Foods
Industry: Food Processing
Location: New Zealand

Challenges
- Expand production facilities to support increased domestic and export sales
- Increase productivity by automating tracking of produce throughout facility
- Optimise operational management by taking advantage of new technology

Objectives
- Extend wireless scanning capabilities across facility
- Ensure trouble-free, low overhead operations
- Provide a platform for further growth

Deployment
- FortiAP
- FortiGate-110C
- Professional Services provided by Fujitsu New Zealand

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"Over the last few years we have introduced bar-code scanning to help us track the bins of produce as they move through the facility," explains Pinto. "In the past we used a paper-based system that took too much time with manual note-taking. So we installed a limited wifi network to support hand-held scanners. We now attach bar-codes on each bin and then use the scanners to track inventory as the bins are shifted. We found that this approach was faster, easier and more accurate…so much so that we made the strategic decision to expand wireless scanning and wifi coverage across the entire complex."

Significant Expansion
Cedenco has been on an aggressive growth path. One initiative has been the construction of a new 3000 sq m processing factory, including frozen goods storage, next to their existing facility. “As we were expanding scanning and wifi capabilities here,” continues Pinto, “we looked at options to include the new factory in our wifi coverage. We were especially interested in finding an AP that we could use in the cold storage… it operates at -18°C...as cold storage is a key part of the business.”

Cedenco Foods and the team at Fujitsu’s Gisborne office had been working together on ICT projects since the early 2000s and have enjoyed a ‘trusted partner’ relationship. “Cedenco asked us to submit a bid to expand wifi coverage at their current facility with the idea to extend it to the new factory when they were ready,” says Andy Memmott, Network Support Specialist, Fujitsu New Zealand Limited. “We had already installed a Fortinet FortiGate 110C UTM Appliance that they used primarily as a firewall and to provide network security. Their current wifi gear was not designed for industrial applications so they were open to suggestions.”

Fortinet ‘the Logical Choice’
“One of the features of the FortiGate 110C is the wireless controller,” notes Memmott, “so they already had all of the management and monitoring capabilities in-place to control more than enough FortiAPs to cover the entire footprint of both factories. So it was the logical decision to recommend that Cedenco standardise their AP constellation with Fortinet equipment.”

“We did a thorough site survey and identified a series of locations that would provide the widest coverage with the fewest APs,” continues Memmott. “We took advantage of the FortiAP’s dual-2.4/5GHz capabilities to provide enhanced coverage as well as PoE (power over Ethernet) to facilitate installation. We were able to give them the initial coverage they wanted by proposing three pole-mounted outdoor-certified FortiAP 222Bs. And since their FortiGate Appliance was already installed, the total cost was quite affordable. Plus the 222Bs are rated to -25°C.”

Cedenco had invited tenders from other service providers but Fujitsu was the winning proposal. “It made good business sense to select Fujitsu as our implementation partner and Fortinet equipment as the foundation for our wifi expansion,” says Pinto. “We had enjoyed trouble-free operations with the Fortinet gateway and had always received top-notch service from the Fujitsu team. We liked the fact that Andy’s team was locally based so, if indeed we did need immediate help, they could respond accordingly. So we awarded the contract to Fujitsu to provide the Fortinet equipment.”

Fast Installation, Robust Operations
Cedenco’s own internal technical team carried out the actual installation with Fujitsu providing configuration and support services. “The install went very well at our then current facility,” says Pinto. “That was about a year ago. Everything worked as specified. And as the new facility was being built, we installed additional APs to cover that area as well. The new facility opened in Feb 2014. It’s interesting to note that we did install one AP in the cold storage room and it is operating without a hitch. So now we have coverage over most of the two facilities and it has provided a backbone for scanning which has in turn allowed us to process more food in less time.”

As Cedenco moves forward with other initiatives, they will take further advantage of their wifi network. “We plan on using wifi to enable managers to roam throughout the facility with their laptops, but that will come later,” concludes Pinto. “But right now we are very satisfied with the way the wifi network is operating. Andy and his team have done an excellent job with the initial set-up and are just a few minutes away if we have any pressing issues. As we expand, we’ll be asking more of our equipment and partners, but we have every confidence that they will continue to provide excellent service.”