A recipe for connectivity: taking on all things wireless for an Australian food manufacturer

AT A GLANCE

Summary:
An Australian food manufacturer needed end-to-end wireless maintenance and support for increasingly complex multisite operations. Affinity Blue stepped in with a Managed Services offer that delivers exceptional Wi-Fi experiences with minimal client-side effort and zero bill-shock.



The situation:

Little to no in-house specialist expertise for rapidly growing wireless needs, leading to critical failures in some infrastructure



The solution:

Managed Services solution combining flexible pricing with best-in-business technical acumen for fast, reliable fixes



The results:

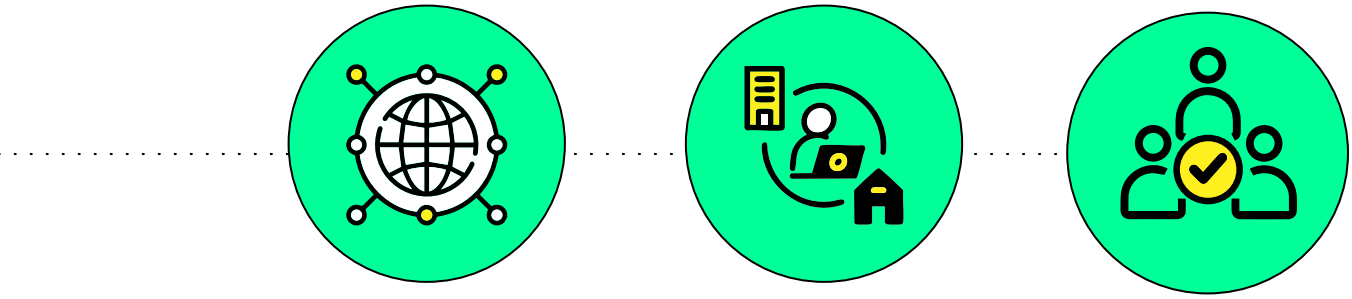
Significant and continuous improvements in wireless uptime, performance at scale, and overall user experience

THE SITUATION

A food manufacturing firm needed wireless network infrastructure to support and grow with its business, which included everything from its head office to critical production and warehousing facilities in both Australia and New Zealand. However, the firm lacked the specialist expertise to maintain its HPE Aruba Networking product suite at peak performance, especially as the business expanded geographically and in its scope of operations. That complexity demanded support from specialists who could understand and enhance not just the network's technical facets, but also the critical business operations relying on it.

After witnessing strong results from deploying HPE Aruba Networking Access Points (APs) to its head office, the manufacturer's IT team sought a partner that could replicate the same high-quality user experience across multiple sites while also fixing existing issues. Such a partner would need to provide ironclad assurance that they could fix any network issues or disruptions, no matter how complex or dire, in a timely manner with both skills and equipment on-tap.

The manufacturer instinctively sought out the two-man team that had pioneered their earlier network deployment – both of whom were now running their own network solutions firm named Affinity Blue. "(Technical Director) Neon and I both knew the team and infrastructure relatively well, which helped us quickly fashion both technical and commercial solutions that addressed their situation," says Simon Hayward, Managing Director of Affinity Blue.



THE SOLUTION

To plug the food manufacturer's skills shortage, Affinity Blue proposed a Managed Services solution that would maintain and scale up its existing use of HPE Aruba Networking APs to all facilities. The manufacturer had concerns about common managed service pricing models; the team devised a "hybrid" commercial model that would offer flexible terms, allowing them to see and control exactly where their network spend was going. This model involved a baseline retainer covering monthly service-level agreements (SLAs) and reporting; as well as 20-hour time blocks that the company could purchase and use to resolve network issues whenever required.

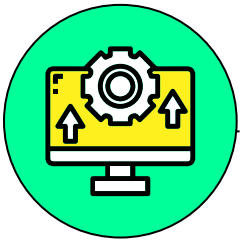
Affinity Blue's technical team proceeded to hit the ground running, taking on increasingly critical performance issues as the Managed Services relationship matured. In one instance, automated guided vehicles (AGVs) – small robots used for warehouse operations – began frequently disconnecting from the network in the company's Melbourne warehouse, creating backlogs that forced staff into overtime and cost the business thousands of dollars.

After Affinity Blue ran comprehensive wireless surveys and investigated the network's overall performance, the team found several key issues with the wireless infrastructure and incompatible devices – the legacy of a previous provider that had failed to adequately maintain wireless integrity during their contract. The team's subsequent remediation plan rapidly stabilised the Melbourne site's wireless network, eliminating the connectivity issues and driving up broader operational efficiency.

Affinity Blue also bundled in monthly reports on wireless network performance and suggested remedies; as well as full, ongoing management of the firm's HPE Aruba Networking licenses. This smoothed the way for the company to extend the same experience across its entire organisation, including:

- HPE Aruba Networking Central as a single cloud-based source of visibility of all network infrastructure;
- HPE Aruba Networking ClearPass Policy Manager for consolidated security and identity management; and
- HPE Aruba Networking APs and switching across three Australian sites, with a fourth expected to be added soon in New Zealand.

"We always aim to get the best out of HPE Aruba Networking's technology and bring together every element of their wireless solutions to create seamless Wi-Fi experiences across even the most complex organisations," said Hayward. **"This project combines best-practical technical implementation with a rock-solid commitment to business priorities and real-world use cases."**



THE RESULTS

Affinity Blue's Managed Services solution has significantly increased uptime, reliability, and overall user experience across the manufacturer's wireless network. Their Wi-Fi experience went from being a frequent pain-point to frictionless performance, where employees can visit an entirely new office but automatically connect to the local network just as easily as their home office.

Today, Affinity Blue looks after the company's wireless network footprint through HPE Aruba Networking Central. The dedicated support team ensures updates and improvements are immediately delivered to all sites in a consistent and timely fashion. Affinity Blue's monthly reports have also evolved over time to meet the firm's changing requirements, including comprehensive performance and health metrics as well as clear indicators of how the team's time (and budget) is being spent.

"Business is always changing, so we're constantly looking for ways to improve the visibility and value that we deliver to customers," said Hayward. "We want our customers to know they can trust us to do the right thing by their business. Over time, we've been able to build up a deep understanding of our customer's technology footprint, operations and culture that really allow us to go above and beyond with them for the long haul."



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Simon Hayward,
Managing Director

AFFINITY BLUE
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https://affinityblue.com.au/

Australia Head Office
Shop 1, 141 Camberwell Rd,
Hawthorn East VIC 3123

info@affinityblue.com.au
1300 22 33 46

Sydney Office
Level 10, 60 Martin Place,
Sydney, NSW 2000

Brisbane Regional Office
Level 1, 470 St Pauls Terrace,
Brisbane, QLD 4006

New Zealand Office
110 Carlton Gore Rd,
Newmarket Auckland 1023

info@affinityblue.co.nz
+64 0800 627 001