

Xirrus Wi-Fi Helps Multi-Location Company Nimbly Turn Around Orders



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MATT BOEHM,
NETWORK AND SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR,
SCHILLING GRAPHICS



Overview

THE FINE PATTERNS YOU SEE ETCHED ON GLASS AND CERAMICS - rear window defroster grids, beverage bottles, printed circuits, the gradient units on syringes — result from a printing technique called silk screening. Schilling Graphics has been in the business since 1962, providing quality silk screens to customers in the automotive, architectural, container, electronic, graphics, industrial, medical, and textile industries. The company operates from three locations: Ohio headquarters plus production facilities in California and Minnesota.

“We take pride in being a nimble company,” says Matt Boehm, network and systems administrator. The evidence: products typically arrive on the customer’s dock just three days after the order is placed. Rapid turnaround depends on employees’ ability to reach each other immediately to resolve issues. Schilling relies heavily on Wi-Fi for communications both internal and external. All managers and sales reps receive company-provided iPhones, and some employees have an iPad or Microsoft Surface.

Given the importance of Wi-Fi to the business, Schilling Graphics needs a fast, reliable network. With the old Wi-Fi solution, during large meetings, only a few people could connect at the same time in the conference room and be ensured a fast and consistent connection. At headquarters, employees couldn’t maintain a connection as they walked from the front door to the rear of the building. Access points required constant adjustments to avoid cross-talk and interference.

Constant Connectivity, Simple Management, and Low-Cost Upgrades

SCHILLING GRAPHICS EVALUATED LEADING WI-FI SOLUTIONS against four criteria. Mobile devices had to stay connected as employees moved through the building. Everyone in the corporate admin area had to be able to connect at the same time — with a good experience. Boehm wanted to manage all access points in all offices from a single management dashboard. And to extend the investment life, the company preferred access points that could be upgraded to support new wireless standards.

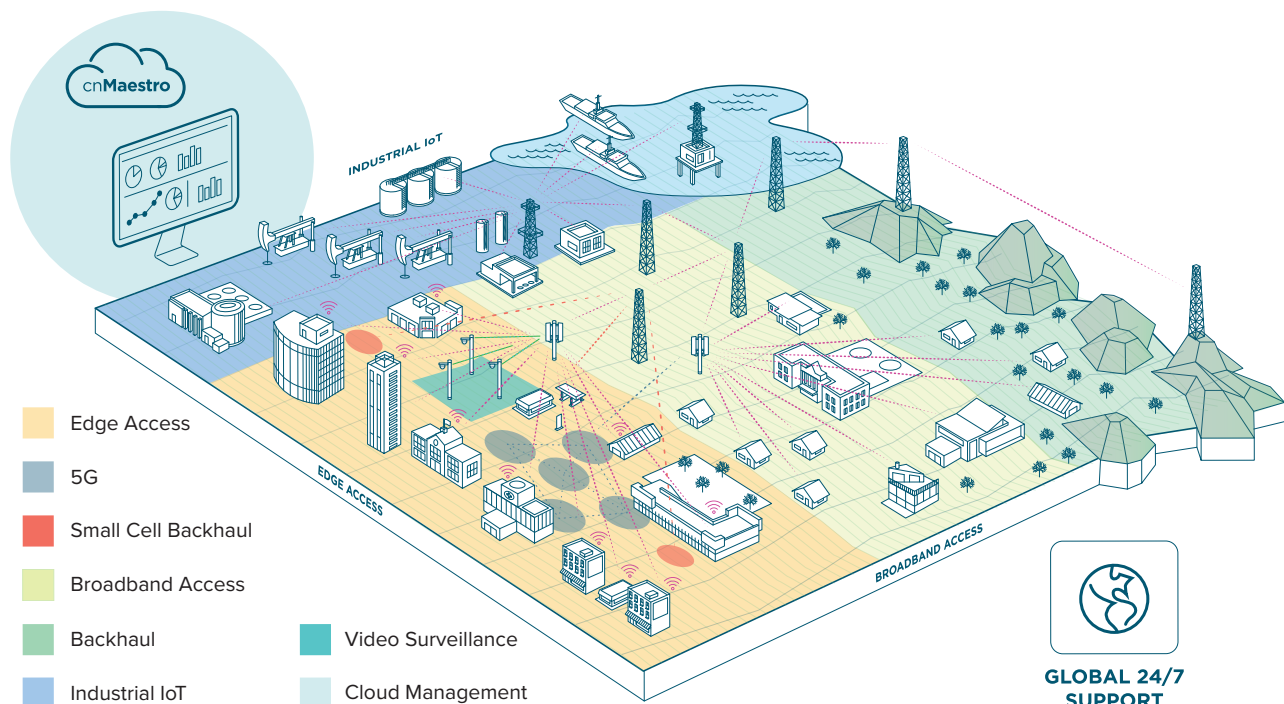
After a proof of concept with the two leading solutions, Xirrus Wi-Fi emerged as the clear winner. Schilling Graphics especially liked knowing that Xirrus Wi-Fi access points will adapt to future Wi-Fi standards — extending investment life and avoiding the expense of “rip and replace.” “With Xirrus [Wi-Fi] we can change out the radios as Wi-Fi standards evolve, cutting costs,” Boehm says. “The experience is excellent. Management is simple.”

Central Management Means Little Effort From IT

BOEHM MANAGES ALL ACCESS POINTS in all locations from one intuitive dashboard, Xirrus Management System (XMS). He configured the access points for the California and Minnesota offices and then shipped them out for a local employee to connect. The network was up and running in minutes. As Schilling Graphics continues to grow through acquisitions, adding new offices to the network will be just as simple

IT Knows who is on the Network, for What Activities

XIRRUS APPLICATION CONTROL SHOWS WHO CONNECTS, the applications they use, and the websites they visit. That's useful when employees are given permission to bring personal devices for the duration of a special project, for instance. "If we later decide to allow BYOD [bring-your-own-device], we'll use Xirrus Application Control to make sure that no one person is consuming too much bandwidth — helping us maintain a good experience for everyone," says Boehm. keeps costs down.



Cambium Networks' Gigabit wireless solutions enable municipal, enterprise and service provider operators to tailor connectivity to meet exact requirements and grow as needs evolve.

The Future: Mobile Building-Systems Management and Easy Upgrades

SCHILLING GRAPHICS PLANS TO START USING network-connected building management systems, such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning. Authorized employees will connect over the Xirrus Wi-Fi network to monitor and manage these systems from anywhere in the building. The value of controlling building systems over the Xirrus Wi-Fi network extends beyond comfort to product quality. Coating areas require consistently high humidity, for example, while drying areas require high temperatures.

Upgrading to 802.11ac Wave 2 will be as simple as snapping in new radios. Not having to replace access points keeps costs down. "The fact that Xirrus [Wi-Fi] access points are upgradable means that we can spread out our investment over several years instead of coming up with a lump sum every three years," Boehm says.