Kafkas S.A.

Greek electric and lighting company installs Cisco Meraki cloud-managed 802.11ac wireless with Bluetooth throughout the country

- Greek electrical and lighting sales company with 47 locations in Greece, services over 7,000 customers daily

- Cloud-managed 802.11ac APs at every store provide three times faster connectivity and support for high density

- Dedicated security radio in each AP scans the environment 24x7 to identify and mitigate wireless threats

- Bluetooth low energy in the APs enables digital marketing by sending promotional notifications to customers

- Built-in features enable increased customer experience and provide a competitive edge in the market

KAFKAS

Kafkas S.A. began as a single store founded in 1975, providing their local community in Greece with electrical equipment and lighting sales services. Since that time, the company has grown quite rapidly, becoming the leading Greek company in this market. They have increased from a handful of employees to nearly 700 employees at 47 locations, and are assisting more than 7,000 customers daily. While their commitment to offering comprehensive solutions and services to clients has remained the same throughout this expansion, their business operations and technology needs have evolved and grown.

IT Director George Kanios and his team had been providing stores and employees with access to a corporate LAN, but no access out to the Internet. With an increasing number of company devices, 3rd party supplier devices, and digital marketing initiatives requiring wireless access, Kanios knew a robust WiFi network was necessary for continued business transformation. After reviewing possible solutions, Kanios selected the Cisco Meraki cloud-managed offering for numerous reasons, including its scalability, centralized management over distributed locations, and built-in features that would take the company into the future.

In the span of just two weeks, the small IT team had all 47 branch locations equipped, configured, and running with Meraki MR32 Access Points. "The process was straightforward with no problems," explained Kanios. "It was a very easy, plug and play installation." The devices were delivered by courier to each of the stores and plugged in by an on-site employee. The team fully configured the devices

remotely from the Meraki dashboard at headquarters, and was able to monitor them as they came online and downloaded their settings from the cloud.

These particular MR32 APs operate on the 802.11ac wireless standard and are equipped with Bluetooth low energy (BLE) technology, which can be used in a variety of different ways, from emitting small packets of data to receiving broadcasts from beacons. The end result is that the Bluetooth radio built into the APs can be used for pushing notifications to nearby applications or for other purposes, like asset tracking.

In addition to the asset tracking capabilities, Kafkas is using BLE for their digital marketing efforts. Customers in proximity to Meraki APs can receive sales offers or special notifications about store events on their devices. This permits the stores to interact with their customers through a different medium, reaching clients who may not currently be in discussions with staff members. Effectively, the BLE technology allows each of the stores to reach a broader audience, increase basket size, and be more impactful overall.

Kanios configured 2 of the 15 available network SSIDs for corporate and guest usage. For corporate devices, users associate via 802.1X RADIUS authentication and have access to both local resources and the Internet. Devices using this secure SSID include corporate-owned barcode scanners and in-store tablets used by sales staff, as well as suppliers' tablets and demo products.

Kafkas employs a variety of options for guest WiFi access, including splash pages which can be quickly customized based on current specials or promotions. Access through Facebook login is another method in which the company can promote brand awareness. Guests wishing to access the free wireless must first 'check-in' to the company's Facebook page, notifying their Facebook community where they are shopping. Kanios has further created Layer 7 traffic shaping rules in the Meraki dashboard, restricting traffic available to high bandwidth-consuming applications. In addition to the customers, employees and suppliers also use this guest SSID for Internet access on their personal devices, ensuring that corporate traffic is prioritized.

> ### "We use the technological potential of Meraki for classic corporate use, for digital marketing, and for a better customer experience."

— George Kanios, IT Director, Kafkas S.A.

Within the dashboard, the team gains deep visibility into every aspect of the network, as well as the ability to remotely monitor and make changes as needed. "A single network engineer manages the network from headquarters via the web-based dashboard," says Kanios. "The dashboard and the automatic alerts provide immediate feedback on network health." The usage reports, which can be automatically and routinely emailed to the network administrators, provide insight into network trends - which devices are commonly connecting, what are the top applications, are there any bandwidth hogs, and more. Further, using the integrated CMX location analytics in the dashboard, Kanios can easily report on customer engagement levels, such as length of store visits, and customer loyalty - information which is critical to marketing efforts, staffing decisions, and store performance.

Complementary to usage reporting and visibility are the security features on each AP are a crucial aspect to the day-to-day operation of the overall network. "Enterprise security (Layer 3 and 7 firewall rules, traffic shaping, RADIUS server) gives us flexibility," explains Kanios. "In addition to the Cisco brand, the Meraki security features were a unique consideration in choosing this solution." Built into

each Meraki AP is a third radio. The radio provides RF optimization for challenging wireless locations that automatically adjusts channel and power settings. This radio also powers Air Marshal, Meraki's wireless intrusion prevention solution, which continuously scans the environment to detect and neutralize wireless security threats.

The Meraki devices have been working flawlessly for Kafkas and they are now looking into Systems Manager, Meraki's mobile device management platform, to extend the benefits of Meraki to other areas of the business. Employees have had an enthusiastic response to the new network which provides them better access to corporate resources and free WiFi on their personal devices. Kanios describes the customer response to be just as positive, "Our customers now feel like they're at home; while they are shopping they have Internet access." Kanios is excited to see the network benefitting in-store employees, suppliers, the IT team, the marketing team, and customers as well.

"The Meraki solution gives us a total professional solution for corporate and guest networks. We use the technological potential of Meraki for classic corporate use, for digital marketing, and for a better customer experience," says Kanios. "Technology leads business transformation and Meraki gives us a competitive advantage in the market."