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CISCO

Delivering a Fresh Network Experience from the Cloud

Highlights

- Full-stack Cisco Meraki network replaces outdated legacy network

- MX appliance and Cisco Umbrella provide integrated SASE security

- Centralized management from the Meraki dashboard streamlines network operations

Key stats

- $300,000 savings in annual support costs by deploying the Meraki network

- Meraki devices to be deployed in more than 700 restaurants across North America

- Averaging 20 new deployments each week

LOCATION

San Diego, CA

INDUSTRY

Retail

PRODUCTS

Meraki Dashboard
MG Wireless WAN/SG
MR wireless LAN
MS switching
MX security and SD WAN

Overview

QDOBA Mexican Eats is a fast-casual Mexican restaurant based in San Diego, California, with more than 700 locations across the U.S. and Canada. The company recently opened its first restaurant in Puerto Rico and is growing its franchise base in a variety of key markets across North America.

Committed to bringing flavor to people's lives, QDOBA uses ingredients freshly prepared in-house by hand throughout the day to create delicious menu options. While it's all about flavor at QDOBA, fast, reliable connectivity is also critical for driving the quality of the guest experience, whether paying for their meal, swiping a rewards card, or ordering online through one of the company's delivery partners.

Challenge

For the past several years, QDOBA outsourced its entire network—across all of its restaurant locations—to a third party. This legacy network used a best-of-breed approach that integrated components from multiple vendors, including access points, switches, firewalls, and Wi-Fi controllers. As QDOBA grew, the network became increasingly complex and challenging to manage—and extremely inflexible. For QDOBA, this meant higher operational costs, more frequent downtime, a lower-quality guest experience, and lost revenue.

Led by Gary Burgess, Director of Infrastructure and Security, QDOBA kicked off an initiative to replace the entire network stack with a modern, cloud-based networking solution that was easy and fast to deploy and could be centrally managed from one location. The company also wanted to bring the network in-house. By doing so, it would have the agility needed to quickly support new business and technology requirements while also regaining control of day-to-day operations and strategic technology decisions.

Solution

QDOBA selected a full-stack Meraki network, managed in the cloud, to seamlessly connect all its restaurant locations and corporate headquarters. The company deployed Meraki MR access points for Wi-Fi connectivity in each of its restaurants, along with Meraki MS for its switching needs and Meraki MG cellular gateways to provide internet backup in the event of a primary internet failure.

To future-proof their network reliability and security, QDOBA combined Meraki MX SD-WAN and security services from Cisco Umbrella as the first step on its journey to a full SASE architecture. Now, the QDOBA network and security teams can proactively identify new threats and coordinate remediation across their operations in real time. As a cloud-first solution, the entire network is managed from the Meraki dashboard, which provides visibility into QDOBA's network from a single location.

The Meraki network implementation was fast—and casual! Three months into the modernization effort, QDOBA had deployed Meraki devices in more than 150 of its restaurants, with a plan to roll it out to the remaining locations over the following months.

> ❝ The complexity in that original solution was huge. With Meraki, that goes out the window. When we couple that with SASE, we get the benefit of having more modern network security, SSL inspection, DLP, and other pieces that we never had before."

GARY BURGESS
Director of Infrastructure and Security

Results

QDOBA has realized several important benefits from the Meraki network. Because Meraki uses a well-established, framework-based approach, the planning process for transforming the QDOBA network was very quick. As Gary notes, in a traditional network buildout, this process typically takes two months or more, while the QDOBA team was able to complete its planning in just two weeks.

One of the biggest immediate benefits QDOBA experienced with the Meraki network was increased network uptime. This is a critical advantage for the business, as it leads to increased sales and a better experience for guests.

With the new Meraki network in place, QDOBA is also seeing a reduction of $300,000 per year in support costs. Just two people are required to support the new network, and when a technical issue does arise, the team can pinpoint and correct it quickly—from anywhere—using the Meraki dashboard. While it used to take a ten-person support team days to troubleshoot issues in the legacy network, with the Meraki network, most issues can now be corrected in a matter of minutes.

QDOBA continues to press forward with its rollout of the Meraki solution to the remaining restaurant locations at an impressive rate of between 15 and 20 new deployments per week. For Gary and his team, the new network means greater simplicity in day-to-day operations and enhanced security and visibility into the entire network from one place. For QDOBA's guests, whether they're visiting in-person or ordering online, it means delicious fresh food and a guest experience that's second to none.

" With Meraki, it's simple. We have three templates; we configure it in one spot, test it, and press a button—and then we're done"

GARY BURGESS
Director of Infrastructure and Security

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