

# Case Study

## Mount Olive Pickle Company

Gaining a Competitive Edge with a Wireless Network from Siemens

### The task

- Mount Olive required a “paperless” mobile workorder entry system that would function across the company’s entire facility.
- Mount Olive also required an RFID tracking system to manage inventory within their warehouse.

### The solution

- Only Siemens HiPath Wireless was able to provide a complete solution for Mt. Olive that included Siemens HiPath Wireless Access Points and Controllers as well as Scalence W rugged Access Points.
- 40 wireless access points were able to provide Mount Olive with complete 802.11 a/b/g coverage for close to one million square feet of indoor space and an additional three million square feet outdoors.
- Maintenance staff were also equipped with wireless VoIP phones to replace Motorola two-way radios that were having coverage issues.

### The benefits

- The ROI from the wireless applications that Mt. Olive deployed on their new WLAN effectively paid for the project within the first year.
- The fence-to-fence Siemens solution cut down on the time paper has to flow through proper channels.

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## Gaining a Competitive Edge with a Wireless Network from Siemens

Headquartered in North Carolina, the Mount Olive Pickle Company is America's largest privately-held pickle company. Since its modest beginnings in 1926, the company has grown to where it currently packs and ships over 90 million jars of processed and fresh pack pickles, relishes and peppers to over 40 states in the USA every year.

### Challenge

Mt. Olive's facilities are located on 110 acres of land with approximately 970,000 square feet of production, office and warehouse space. In addition to the production and packaging equipment inside the factory, the company has over 1,200 fiberglass and plastic brine vats distributed around the grounds. Monitoring and maintaining all this equipment both indoors and out was an expensive proposition. In addition to conventional Access Points and Controllers, Mt. Olive needed rugged WLAN components that could withstand the harsh environmental conditions of the factory, warehouse and shipping area.

To help reduce annual maintenance costs, the company planned to create a "paperless" mobile workorder entry system that would function across the company's entire facility. This new wireless work-order system and the facility for real-time monitoring of vats and tanks throughout the factory, warehouse and grounds would save time and money on maintenance overhead. Beyond the work-order system, the company hoped to

leverage their investment in wireless LAN infrastructure by upgrading their Motorola two-way radio system to a wireless VoIP solution. This would reduce communications costs and resolve persistent coverage issues.

They also planned to use the WLAN to support an upgrade to their Warehouse Management System (WMS). New EDI requirements with suppliers and customers required the implementation of an RFID tracking system to manage inventory within their warehouse.

Underlying all of these immediate requirements, Mt. Olive wanted to deploy a system that would grow with them and support changes in their business processes and new technology. Advances such as; wireless security systems, dualmode phones, PLC to PLC communications and converged wireless PDAs (voice/data) had to be supported within their chosen technology.

### Solution

Only Siemens HiPath Wireless was able to provide a complete solution for Mt. Olive. Siemens' integrated WLAN suite includes HiPath Wireless Access Points and Controllers as well as Scalence W rugged Access Points. For Mt. Olive's production and warehouse environments, 31 Scalence W Access Points were installed around the factory, warehouse and loading docks to deliver rugged wireless access, while 8 HiPath Wireless Access Points were installed in the office areas.

All of the Access Points are managed by a pair of redundant HiPath Wireless Controllers. In total, less than 40 wireless access points were able to provide Mt. Olive with complete 802.11 a/b/g coverage for close to one million square feet of indoor space and an additional three million square feet outdoors.

"We are totally wireless, fence-to-fence," says Dan Bowen, who serves as Vice President of finance for the company and also oversees the firm's technology initiatives. That's important because those outdoor facilities include a number of brine vats and other systems that require close monitoring. With the wireless network, maintenance personnel can now monitor all of these systems remotely, receiving alerts in real time when things go wrong.

Once the WLAN was installed, Mount Olive was easily able to deploy a PDA-based "paperless" work-order system for their maintenance people. For less than \$100,000 in hardware and training, the company was able to significantly reduce the amount of time it takes to process work-orders. Members of the maintenance staff were also equipped with wireless VoIP phones to replace the Motorola two-way radios that were having coverage issues. Future plans include the implementation of fully converged PDA/VoWLAN handsets; however, until these mobile device capabilities are available, the two separate devices currently deployed will be supported.

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## Gaining a competitive edge with a Wireless Network from Siemens

### Benefits

The ROI from the wireless applications that Mt. Olive deployed on their new WLAN effectively paid for the project within the first year. The entire project cost the company less than \$250,000 and annual savings from the new systems were well above that. The big winner was the "paperless" work-order system.

"This will tremendously cut down on the time the paper has to flow through the proper channels," Bowen says. With some 70,000 work orders being processed each year, a savings of even 10 minutes on each one, translates to \$1 million over three years. That's on top of the \$100,000 in savings over three years that automated monitoring brings simply by eliminating the need for maintenance personnel to walk to various areas of the facility to check water levels, monitor pumps, and the like.

Less tangible, but equally important, the improved coverage from the WLAN system, and improved functionality of the PDA-based work-order system now permit one worker, as opposed to two, to respond to each maintenance call, thus effectively doubling the size of the maintenance work force and permitting a reallocation of resources to preventative maintenance.

The ROI from the other solutions deployed are still being refined, but one immediate cost savings was the integration of the new wireless VoIP system with the company's office phone system which allowed them to reduce the long distance charges on the mobile handsets by 60%. In addition, Mt. Olive saved almost \$50,000 in cabling charges that would have been required to set up a conventional wired LAN and another \$80,000 expense for the new towers and handsets

required to extend and improve the coverage of their two-way radio network.

Having made the initial investment in WLAN technology, Mt. Olive now finds itself in an enviable place. They have a "fence-to-fence" WLAN that has already paid for itself and ambitious plans for the future. In the mean time, the Siemens Wireless Network is providing tangible benefits on a day-to-day basis, Bowen says.

"The wireless network provides us with the ability to get information into the hands of the right people at the right time to make the right decisions to make this company as profitable as it can be," he says. "I think we have a technological advantage over our competitors and wireless has helped us achieve that."

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**Dan Bowen**

VP of Finance, Mount Olive Pickle Company



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