



➤ Restaurant Brands NZ gets camera friendly

In 2011, RBD started rolling out cameras and now has made them standard in all the new stores.

THE BUSINESS

If you have eaten at a KFC, Pizza Hut, Carl's Jr or Starbucks café in New Zealand anytime in the last week (or the last few years), then you have already had an interaction with the company behind it all. Restaurant Brands New Zealand (RBD) is a corporate franchisee that operates all the outlets under the four brands. The company, which originally purchased 77 KFC stores and 43 Pizza Hut stores, was created in 1997. This number has grown significantly and in February this year, RBD reported 89 KFC, 57 Pizza Hut, 29 Starbucks and two Carl's Jr stores.

In 2011, RBD made a few strategic moves – for one, it took on the Carl's Jr burger brand, of which the company expects to have 10 stores by January 2014, and for another, it started selling off a number of its smaller regional Pizza Hut stores to independent franchisees.

In the same year, the company also started rolling out a range of surveillance cameras in its stores.

"We started looking at cameras in 2011. We went through a process where we looked at a number of suppliers. We really liked the solution that was put up by Lexel – which is one of the partners that we deal with quite a lot, which was using Axis cameras and a software product called Milestone XProtect," says Geoff Holton, commercial manager IT at RBD.

"In 2011, we ran that at five sites as a pilot and out of that we decided to roll it out to our KFC brands first. We have rolled out to all of KFC stores. We have got them in all of

our Carl's Jr stores, and we have rolled them out selectively in our Starbucks and Pizza Hut stores. Altogether, we have got now around 1350 cameras operating across 115 sites. That would be a good two thirds of the business," says Holton.

The stores currently operate on a mix of internal (Axis M3204 and M3004) and external (Axis P3343 and P3364) cameras.

"In the typical configuration, the average would be 12 cameras per store," says Holton. "We put cameras in the front of the store – near the entrance and the customer side of the store. We put cameras in back of house – around food preparation areas, back door, office and those areas. We put cameras over the registers. And we also put external cameras looking at the car park and generally through the driveway. That's the typical scenario."

"We use a product called Milestone XProtect that runs the cameras. We use it to access footage, and configure and control the cameras through that," explains the IT manager.

Footage from the cameras is held for up to 30 days on HP servers with a 1.3TB drive at stores where cameras are operational. Since Milestone XProtect enables anytime-anywhere access from within the network to the stored footage, RBD has been able to avoid any additional spend on upgrading the network with the camera deployment.

USES THAT DRIVE THE SOLUTION

According to Holton, the primary drive behind getting cameras in store was to help managers with running the day-to-day operations of stores.

“There are really three key ways that we use cameras in the stores for. One is day-to-day operations, the second is loss prevention and the third is security and community,” says Holton.

“The primary use is to help us with the day-to-day operations of the stores. We have the ability anywhere on the network for area managers or for senior managers to jump in and see those cameras. Typically an area manager can visit only one or two stores at a time, but now they can jump on the cameras and look at the foyer area in front-of-house.

“They can see how many customers they have, how many registers are open, how many staff they have operating in the counter. So they have the ability to jump in and have a look at stores at a peak period to see how they are running.”

“Another example would be food preparation, where we can go and have a look at a make table, where they are making pizzas, or a cut table where they are cutting and boxing it, or a breasting table in a KFC store, where they are actually breasting the chicken and preparing it before it goes in. That is all about food safety, ensuring the quality of the product, managing waste and staffing levels again,” says Holton.

“The second area is loss prevention. One of the products that we put in at the same time is Micros XBR, which is a loss prevention software. That identifies transactions of interest, or unusual transactions, like refunds, voids and discounts. In any particular day, 430 registers operating out there, we have tens – if not hundreds – of thousands of transactions. So XBR enables us to have a look at the handful of transactions that it has identified as being unusual.

“We have just over 5000 staff, in the first 20 weeks of the financial year we actually picked up 16 staff that were basically stealing. Most of our staff are honest hard working, but in any business you do get some that steal and now we have got very good tools to identify unusual transactions and then view them,” says Holton.



RBD also uses the cameras in general security and community building exercises, including staff assaults, theft of customer products at restaurants, store security and break-ins, health, safety, property damage and even the occasional request for footage from the police.

Cameras have become a standard part of the set up process now, whereby all new stores will have cameras installed in them. According to Holton, the company is quite pleased with the performance of the Axis cameras and will continue to use them in new stores.

“We have good quality digital images. We are actually in a harsh environment - we have a lot of heat, a lot of flare, so quite harsh. But we have been really happy with the way the cameras have operated. I have a service team and we monitor when camera service is affected or goes offline entirely. The failure rate with these cameras are less than 1 per cent. So we are really happy with the way they are functioning,” says Holton.

Reproduced article: ComputerWorld New Zealand (11th November 2013).

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