CISCO Meraki

# Facilitating International Growth

Technology was a key enabler in the growth and regional expansion of self-storage company Lock+Store.

## Lock+Store

**Industry:**
Self-storage and serviced offices

**Location:**
18 locations across Singapore, Hong Kong & Malaysia

**Size:**
40-50 employees

**Website:**
www.lockandstore.com

## Challenges

- Supporting an aggressive business expansion, in Singapore and in international markets
- Upgrading an existing network infrastructure to achieve cost and operational efficiencies
- Moving a traditionally on-premise operational model towards a cloud strategy

## Solution

- Cisco Meraki Switches
- Cisco Meraki Wireless Access Points
- Cisco Meraki Security Appliance with Advanced Security for Content, IDS (Intrusion Detection System) and IPS (Intrusion Prevention System)
- Cisco Meraki Z1 – Teleworker Gateway
- Cisco Meraki Systems Manager
- Cisco Meraki vMX Security Appliance in Microsoft Azure Cloud

## Outcomes

- Convenient wireless access – for both customers and employees
- Greater collaboration across lines of business
- Better insights on network performance and broader visibility on all 18 locations (a single source of truth)
- Streamlined network connectivity
- Improved security framework and capacity to quickly investigate incidents
- Cost-effective wireless and network connectivity for smaller offices

Lock+Store, a member of the Singapore Post Group of Companies, is a forerunner in the provision of private storage. In 2014, Lock+Store's operation consisted of just three locations in Singapore. However, CEO Helen Ng believed that companies in space-constrained Singapore, particularly small businesses, will have increasing need for a flexible and affordable storage option for their inventories. She further believed that such a business model would be viable regionally.

In 2014, Helen announced Lock+Store's intent to expand its footprint in Singapore and to venture into international markets. That same year, the company acquired four storage properties in Hong Kong and opened its facility in Malaysia. The next year, it acquired its largest competitor in Singapore, Store Friendly, which then had 12 locations in the country.

In less than five years, the company had expanded to 18 locations across three different countries. Lock+Store's customers today include small businesses, enterprises, as well as private individuals. Besides storage facilities, the company also provides ancillary services such as serviced offices.

## Aggressive expansion

One of the key challenges that Lock+Store faced, as it embarked on its aggressive expansion through a mergers and acquisitions strategy, was that new branches had different network infrastructures. The network and security systems in these branches needed to be quickly integrated and work seamlessly. Any downtime experienced in operations can translate into loss in revenue, as well as potentially, lapses in the quality of service to customers.

> "Security is our utmost priority, because we are dealing with personal data, valuables and company inventories."
>
> **Helen Ng**
> CEO, Lock+Store

Initially, Lock+Store also needed to manage the local private network as well as a separate infrastructure for internet connection across all the branches. This was a costly setup.

Maintaining separate systems for a prolonged period contributed to operational inefficiencies and hampered an optimal allocation of resources. For example, operational staff needed to be physically present at the branches to manage the locks.

# The solution: key benefits

Lock+Store's management team, in discussion with their technology partner, Acuutech, considered a range of factors in deciding on the optimal solution. The Cisco Meraki solution was chosen for several benefits it provided:

- **Single view to the truth:** Lock+Store's operational staff now have broader visibility on what is happening across all their branches. They are also able to resolve issues in their network much faster and without needing to be physically present at any one location. They can access CCTVs in any location, all of which are connected to the Cisco Meraki network.

  In addition, management and operational staff now have the benefit of a single source to the truth. A single dashboard provides an overview of every aspect of their network — the switches, wireless and the endpoints — are all active and functioning properly.

- **Improved connectivity, greater collaboration:** Telephone systems are centralized and interconnected, allowing staff to easily route phone calls from anywhere in the network. There is also greater ease of file sharing, and the ability to access and work on documents from any location in a secure fashion. The net effect of all these is a lesser need to travel, ability to collaborate on documents across line of business applications and in future, the flexibility to work from anywhere.

- **Migration to the cloud:** While the nature of Lock+Store's business required a lot of data and applications to be on-premise, their direction is to progressively migrate to the cloud. The Cisco Meraki vMX Security Appliance in Microsoft Azure Cloud solution allowed Lock+Store to run IT as a service, without needing to invest in any new equipment like servers on-premise. The solution laid the foundation for Lock+Store's future in the cloud.

- **Confidence on security:** As the market leader in enterprise networking and in network security, the Cisco track record was a critical factor in choosing Cisco Meraki solutions. Said Helen: "Security is our utmost priority, because we are dealing with personal data, valuables and company inventories. In addition to that, we also needed to be able to securely investigate incidents or network issues when they happen. Above all, we were confident of the Cisco Meraki solution in this area."

- **A convenient wireless solution:** Lock+Store needed to provide wireless connections to clients at its serviced offices as well as its employees. In this respect, the solution provided unparalleled convenience. "Employees don't have to remember passwords or go to a special portal to connect," Helen said. "As long as they are using a corporate device and are at a corporate location, they are already connected to the corporate network."

- **Small office proposition:** For some of its smaller offices, Lock+Store needed to provide wireless as well as connectivity to the Internet and corporate network. The Cisco Meraki Z1 Teleworker Gateway was a cost-effective, yet enterprise class solution that fulfilled this need. It was uniquely suited for Lock+Store's situation, considering the need for new branches to be integrated quickly, without any of the complexities that traditional site-to-site VPN solutions would have entailed.

"What we needed was a solution and a blueprint for a network infrastructure that would incorporate multiple new locations into our service structure quickly."

**Helen Ng**
CEO, Lock+Store

## Technology + Value-Adds

In 2014, as the company embarked on its expansion, it had discussions with its technology partners on how to integrate acquired locations quickly and cost-effectively.

"What we needed was a solution and a blueprint for a network infrastructure that would incorporate multiple new locations into our service structure quickly," Helen said. "As our business scaled up, we wanted to make the most of the opportunity to improve our operational efficiency, freeing us to focus on the things that really

mattered to our customers — the quality and the range of services we can offer them."

She added: "One of the things that really helped our planning efforts, was our technology partners' ability to give us fairly precise estimates on what it would cost to run our new sites, the length of time it would take to integrate new offices and the operational enhancements we will achieve. This greatly facilitated our expansion and also helped us to optimize our resource allocations."

**Lock+Store's operational staff now have broader visibility on what is happening across all their branches.**

**Single view to the truth**

**Confidence on security**

**Improved connectivity, greater collaboration**

Solution Benefits

**A convenient wireless solution**

**Migration to the cloud**

**Small office proposition**