

Northgate Markets

What do 42 grocery stores, a large corporate office and a 350,000 square foot distribution center have in common? They all make use of artificial intelligence. AI-powered Wi-Fi as-a-service enables our company to focus on our core competency, which is to manage stores and distribute food and goods.

We have come a long way since Northgate Markets was founded in 1980 by Miguel Gonzalez Sr. and his family. The company's focus to deliver great food and service to its customers has not changed over the last 37 years, but information technologies have become more and more important. By moving away from legacy IT solutions where we buy and manage everything, to more network and software as-a service, we can easily monitor our many stores, distribution center and our corporate office, as one global network from anywhere.



Harrison Lewis
CIO, Northgate Markets

Earlier this year we were faced with the challenge of making major upgrades to our Wi-Fi network to make sure we could improve productivity and delivery of food to our many stores from our new distribution center. On average, we needed 8 access points per store and a mix of indoor and outdoor access points at our corporate office and distribution center.

The Wi-Fi network requirements included:

- Easy to manage and control (cloud)
- No need for site surveys
- Over the air updates (cloud)
- Automatic notifications (network issues)
- No need for additional IT resources (staff)
- Opex not capex (we do not want to buy and manage)

Wi-Fi vendors pitched us on solutions that would require us to buy access points, buy service as well as staff up in the IT department to manage the new network. In brief, they were trying to sell us legacy products and services. Instead, we chose Wi-Fi-as-a-service powered by artificial intelligence. The service includes a network of indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi access points (APs) that are shipped directly to our stores, eliminating the need for us to buy equipment. Each of the store networks was up and running in short order. The vendor, KodaCloud, manages the network and provides proactive network monitoring.

Many network problems are identified and resolved without our knowledge because of the AI system. When our IT staff does need to intervene, the alert usually comes from the network itself rather than from a frustrated employee. AI is indeed the end of legacy networking solutions.