

**Customer: Kingsland Drinks Limited****Partner: Holker IT****Market: Manufacturing/Industrial****Location: Headquarters,  
Manchester, England**

## Allied Telesis' Channel Blanket Technology Streamlines Kingsland Drinks' Facilities



**Kingsland Drinks replaced an ailing and ineffective WLAN with an Allied Telesis solution to vastly improve productivity and prepare for future company growth.**

Kingsland Drinks is a premier independent UK supplier of bulk wine and spirits. The company offers services including contract packing, bottling, distribution, product creation, and flavor development, catering to retailers and brands. It has evolved into an employee-owned business with more than 400 staff members.

Kingsland Drinks bottles the wine and spirits on site and distributes these products to customers throughout the UK. The company has seven automated production lines with extensive capability operating 24/7. The production environment has a high reliance on the IT infrastructure to monitor and manage the movement of stock within the enormous facility. A robust IT environment is critical to supporting current operations as well as furthering company growth.

### **An Ineffective WLAN Was Hurting Productivity**

Brian Polkinghorne is the IT Manager at Kingsland Drinks. "We installed a Wi-Fi system a few years ago to complement our new business system. The intention was that all forklift drivers would have a handheld scanner and be able to move stock around by scanning it in from one location to another," explains Polkinghorne. "Plain and simple, the Wi-Fi failed us. As a result, forklift drivers had to dismount to go find a PC

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**Brian Polkinghorne**

*IT Manager at Kingsland Drinks*

and enter information manually. That cost us a crazy amount of time in manhours just moving stock about the site." The failing WLAN also led to an inordinate number of IT helpdesk requests and damage to the IT group's reputation.

Despite being only three years old, the WLAN infrastructure had been designed poorly and was not fit for purpose. There were dead spots where the Wi-Fi signal was too weak or too unstable to maintain wireless connectivity to support the inventory application. The incumbent



technology manufacturer did not directly support the design or troubleshooting of the solution, leaving Kingsland Drinks feeling isolated and without support to improve their situation.

The loss of productivity was costing them money. The company engaged Holker IT, a leading supplier of business-aligned IT solutions and services, to design and install a better WLAN architecture. Operation throughout the facility was critically important, as was manageability and support of the new solution.

## Challenges and Requirements for a New WLAN Infrastructure

"When we first surveyed the site, we realized the complexities of the environment and understood that more is actually involved in delivering a workable solution," says Matt Metcalfe, Managing Director of Holker IT. The cavernous warehouse facility has conditions that are usually detrimental to reliable wireless network connectivity. "The facility has lots of fluid, lots of cardboard, outdoor areas, and refrigeration trucks turning up full of wine and then leaving empty and returning again with more wine," says Metcalfe. "There are temperature fluctuations. The winter months can be down to -10 Centigrade, and in the summertime, high areas of the warehouse can exceed 40 degrees C. Older areas of the building have very thick walls. It all makes for an extraordinarily complex environment in which to install a reliable Wi-Fi solution."

Holker and the Kingsland Drinks IT team outlined the main requirements for a new WLAN. First, it needed to provide site-wide coverage with no dead spots. This included multiple large warehouses, production halls, outdoor areas for loading/unloading trucks, and office and meeting spaces. The new network had to be reliable, stable, and offer high performance for the handheld terminals as well as higher speed devices such as laptops, tablets, and phones in the office spaces.

The on-site IT department also needed a management platform which would provide the ability to see a visual representation of the network, the traffic and performance of the WLAN, and the devices which were connected at any given time. Given that the site is a 24/7 production environment with a high reliance on the IT infrastructure, the ability to remotely monitor, manage, and troubleshoot the network was also vital.

## A PoC Demonstrated the Value of the Allied Telesis Solution

Kingsland Drinks initially attempted to engage with the incumbent WLAN supplier. They reviewed the opportunity to upgrade the existing network with the latest technology from the same Tier 1 vendor. However, the IT team was not confident that the supplier could provide a solution tailored to their specific environment and needs.

Holker then proposed a meeting with Allied Telesis to discuss a potential solution. "Allied Telesis came to our site and gave us a demonstration of Vista Manager," says Polkinghorne. "Having a vendor come to us to give a demonstration is something I've never experienced before. We appreciated the personal attention."

Allied Telesis also took the time to demonstrate the concept of its unique Channel Blanket technology and Hybrid Wireless Infrastructure to show the hypothetical benefits and performance. Channel Blanket provides the ability to design and deploy highly resilient WLAN solutions for manufacturing and warehouse environments.

Allied Telesis deployed a small Proof of Concept based on three WAPs and trial licensing for Vista Manager EX, Autonomous Wave Control (AWC), and AWC-CB for Channel Blanket. Kingsland Drinks then built a test network, deployed it around different parts of the business, and monitored the performance and stability and feedback from the staff. "During the initial demonstration, I couldn't believe what I was hearing," says Polkinghorne. "After testing it for ourselves, I see it was all true."

Kingsland Drinks bought into this solution and awarded the project to Holker IT. Allied Telesis Sales and Pre-Sales experts worked alongside Holker to provide technical advice, with Holker being ultimately responsible for the successful design, planning, implementation, and ongoing support of the new network.

"From day one of the installation, they've been nothing but professional," says Polkinghorne. "As Holker installed the entire system with the cabling and the switch configurations to make everything work, they were backed up by Allied Telesis a hundred percent all the way through. Allied Telesis did firmware updates specifically for our network. I couldn't have asked for anything more. The new Wi-Fi system has covered the entire site with a Channel Blanket and the difference is amazing."



James Went, has been very helpful in diagnosing any problems. Using Vista Manager, we can track whether it's a specific access point, a user error, or an error with the handheld device."

As for the future, Holker has been tasked to design a solution for a new LAN backbone to support the WLAN infrastructure and prepare the Kingsland Drinks infrastructure for future growth. "Allied Telesis has supported Holker and Holker has supported me throughout this entire process," says Polkinghorne. "It's a partnership that I know works and I will be using this partnership again. It has been the best decision to form this team and keep it going."

## The New WLAN Solution

The solution proposed by Holker included the following Allied Telesis components:

- TQ5403 Wireless Access Points for indoor areas
- TQ5403e Wireless Access Points for outdoor areas and areas requiring external directional antennas
- AWC Channel Blanket licensing for the hybrid wireless architecture
- Vista Manager EX and AWC for visual monitoring and in-depth management

Allied Telesis also provided professional services and support to Holker IT and Kingsland Drinks as follows:

- Digital Predictive Site Survey to map and understand the physical characteristics of the environment
- Design and Solution Architecture support alongside the Pre-Sales team at Holker IT
- Remote configuration support during the installation process
- Remote troubleshooting assistance during the testing and acceptance phase of the project

## The Results and Future Plans

The new network provides much greater coverage across the site, with no dead spots being reported by users and monitoring software showing good coverage in all required areas. What's more, the network is much more stable with virtually no handheld terminal disconnects or issues reported. The IT team has much more confidence in the WLAN, with reporting and management helping them to understand how the network is performing and easily being able to make changes where required.

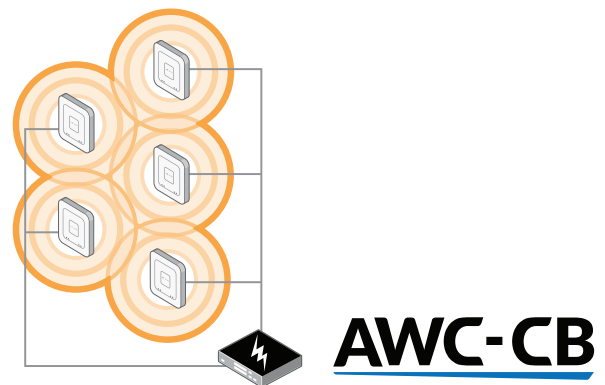
Productivity is significantly increased, production managers are happier, efficiency targets are being met, and the users operating the forklift trucks and handheld terminals are happier as they have a smooth, seamless experience.

"The feedback from the users has been very positive," reports Farai Mugwagwa, Systems Analyst at Kingsland Drinks. "Forklift drivers say they stay connected from one side of the site to the other side, which is very useful, especially if we have loads coming from one warehouse to another. I also have great feedback from when I report a trouble ticket to Holker. The project manager at Holker,

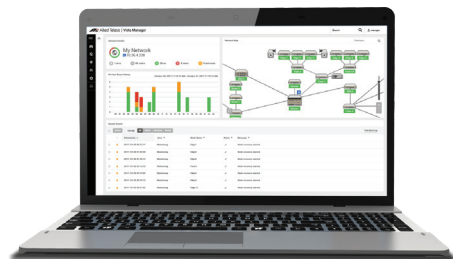
## Related products and technologies



Wireless Access Points



AWC Channel Blanket (AWC-CB)



Vista Manager