

## Three Key Considerations When Deploying WiFi In Restaurants

With proper planning, you can securely offer your customers the convenience of a BYOD network.

By Jordan Parker Means  
Contributing writer,  
QSRweb.com

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Sitting down in a restaurant or cafe, pulling out your mobile device and being unable to connect to a WiFi network can be torturous, particularly if you have some important business to attend to. “When you look at bring your own device statistics, the average customer carries 2.5 WiFi capable devices with them at all times,” said Amanda Manly, Marketing Manager, National Service Center and Spartan Computer Services. The good news is that with proper planning and knowledge of potential issues, restaurants can successfully and effectively deploy WiFi, providing customers with the access they need and desire to utilize their mobile devices.



This white paper, sponsored by Spartan Computer Services, a service and installation company that specializes in cabling, digital signage, point-of-sale systems, kiosks, computers, wireless (WiFi) and other IT equipment-related deployments, will lay out three key considerations that restaurant owners should review before deploying WiFi.

### IT Expertise

When it comes to enabling WiFi in a restaurant, it takes much more than plugging

in a wireless router and saying go. Successful deployment involves an IT component and requires proper setup as well as maintenance. Because restaurants often lack a dedicated IT team, the most effective solution is support once WiFi has been properly installed. With these technical considerations in mind, Spartan Computer Services provides restaurants with the security of knowing the hardware and cabling required for the successful deployment of wireless services is properly installed and configured to guarantee a strong, uninterrupted signal.

### Security

Once a decision has been made to install and enable customers to utilize WiFi, several interim decisions must be made before launch. First, owners must decide whether to utilize a free or paid model. The difference in the two models is self-explanatory, and customers are often willing to pay a premium if required to utilize WiFi. Second, a decision must be made on whether to utilize password protection or not. The utilization of a password can prevent non-customers from accessing the internet through a restaurant's WiFi service. Oftentimes, where a password is involved, owners post it throughout the restaurant or print the password on receipts. In order to be effective, the password must be changed regularly.

Another security option is forcing an automatic redirect to a terms of services page upon launch. The language on such pages is generally very generic, but it does provide an element of protection for owners. It prevents customers from targeting the owner if information is lost or stolen on an open network and also lays out parameters for the types of websites that can be accessed while utilizing the restaurant's WiFi.

Another concern is whether to set limitations on bandwidth and time online. Some patrons will come into a restaurant, sit down at a table and log onto the internet for four hours without making a single purchase. Others may stream music and movies that use up a significant portion of the bandwidth and slow down the WiFi service for other users. Given these potential situations, owners must determine whether or not it is prudent to set up a limit on the length of time an individual can access the



internet in one set or whether service will be slowed or even stopped after a certain amount of bandwidth is used.

### Proper Protocol

The final set of considerations are the most technically intensive involved in the set up of WiFi in restaurants. "Compliance is a hurdle restaurant owners have to overcome after a decision to implement wireless services has been made," said Tim O'Connor, Professional Services Manager for National Service Center and Spartan Computer Services.

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If an owner makes a decision to allow customers to access the internet wirelessly they must ensure that there is a separation between the public, point of sale (POS) and corporate connections. This protects customer credit card information as well as private business information. If the same connection is utilized for each, there is a chance of a security breach, and in that instance, the restaurant would be at fault.

Depending on the size of a restaurant's customer base as well as the depth of their security concerns, it could be necessary to also utilize a virtual local area network (VLAN). This will improve performance of the network as the number of users increases and also simplify administration by decreasing the number of routers required. VLANs can also be used to separate business and public wireless connections. There are many possible options here, and working with a professional installation company can help you determine what makes the most sense for your business.

Given the propensity for restaurant patrons to carry and have the desire to utilize their WiFi enabled devices, the next logical step for restaurants is to deploy WiFi for use by their customers. Once decisions have been made on the key considerations, owners can take the step of enhancing the



restaurant experience by implementing wireless services.

**About the sponsor:** National Service Center is a service and installation company that specializes in cabling, digital signage, point-of-sale systems, kiosks, computers, wireless (WiFi) and other IT equipment-related deployments.

*Spartan Computer Services (SCS), based in Greenville, S.C., is a national company specializing in the delivery of point-of-sale services to multi-unit restaurant operators. These services include procurement, cabling, installation and maintenance. SCS is the only national company exclusively focused on providing technology services to the multi-unit restaurant industry.*