

Battling Wi-Fi Barriers in a “Mountain Modern” Home with Basic Configuration Services

Photo courtesy of Lifestyle Electronics

Lifestyle Electronics utilizes Access Networks’ Basic Configuration Services to deliver optimal Wi-Fi performance in homes constructed of signal-blocking steel, stone, metal and glass.

When Access Networks joined the Snap One family, the integration team at Lifestyle Electronics in Park City, Utah, took serious notice. The addition of an enterprise-grade networking solution to the Snap One portfolio gave the seasoned pros yet another networking option to explore and a way to combat the tricky Wi-Fi challenges they seemed to be encountering with greater frequency. Signal-blocking home construction, escalating Wi-Fi traffic and customer reluctance to commit a bigger than expected portion of their home tech budgets for networking equipment were all contributing to the complications.

THE CHALLENGE



Home Composition Wi-Fi Barriers

“Materials like steel, stone, metal, and glass have become very popular in the ‘mountain modern’ homes of our clientele,” explains Lifestyle Electronics’ Kyle Storms. Although beautiful and en vogue, these durable, rugged components are natural Wi-Fi roadblocks. *“We needed a networking system that would consistently overcome these design barriers; we learned that the unique technologies built into Wi-Fi access points from Access Networks could do the trick,”* Storms continues.

More Transmission Congestion

As for increasingly heavy Wi-Fi traffic, *“It’s now common for everyone in a household to be on Wi-Fi at the same time accessing very data-intensive, high-res applications,”* says Storms. *“This squeezes bandwidth, causes bottlenecks and slows down the network, tremendously.”*



Network System Sticker Shock

Then there’s sticker shock. Now that networks need to handle more and perform with greater reliance and stability, they naturally carry a higher premium. Many customers balk at this expense, but as Lifestyle Electronics discovered, *“certain solutions from Access Networks would help conquer the push-back.”*

Dealing with Demanding Wi-Fi Requirements

Storms recalls a recent project where his team took advantage of Access Networks products and design resources to effectively tackle a particularly tricky wireless networking project. The systems would need to support multiple Zoom calls and high-res video streaming for a family of seven, plus Internet usage by frequent visitors who stayed in the adjacent guest house. Also propagating the Wi-Fi network would be control and data signals passing to and from a highly equipped automation system.

“We’ve successfully deployed Wi-Fi systems for demanding applications like this for many, many years,” Storms says. Still, there’s a better, more efficient solution and in this particular situation, Lifestyle Electronics designed and executed a system around Access Networks’ unique networking products, support, and service. Although Access Networks was a recent addition to Lifestyle Electronics’ portfolio, it did not take the techs long to get onboard with the brand. Thanks to Access Networks Basic Configuration Services, they were able to quickly deploy a Wi-Fi networking system efficiently right off the bat.

Basic Configuration Services Minimized the Workload

We're able to get a networking system up and running in record time."

- Kyle Storms
Lifestyle Electronics

Part of this critical "breaking in" period occurred during network deployment in the Mountain Modern home. Rather than spending an inordinate amount of time and manpower testing and trialing solutions, Lifestyle Electronics sent a single blueprint to the Access Networks team, along with a summary of important variables like the construction materials, layout, and expected household Wi-Fi usage. "We also consulted with our clients to compile a list of SSIDs, user passwords, and partitioning requirements," Storms relates. From these documents, Access Networks specified the appropriate networking equipment, preconfigured the settings of each component, and shipped the entire package to Lifestyle Electronics, along with specific instructions on the best locations for each access point. "Minus a few minor tweaks at the jobsite, *we're able to get a networking system up and running in record time,*" Storms says.

Developed to provide integrators deploying small to medium size networks meaningful design, configuration and installation service and support, even in-the-field assistance, Basic Configuration Services allowed Lifestyle Electronics to lean on the expertise of Access Networks as they familiarized themselves with the nuances of the technologies and products. "It's a much less stressful way of onboarding a brand," says Storms. "*Plus, we can sidestep mistakes and delays that normally happen as you learn a new system.*"



Photo courtesy of Lifestyle Electronics

Basic Configuration Services provides validation of the expense through the eyes of a legitimate outside source. It seems to shut down the argument from clients; plus, builders love the fact that we are able to supply them with marked-up plans to keep the project on track."

Networks in Half the Time, Greater Customer Acceptance

Basic Configuration Services was such a helpful resource to Lifestyle Electronics in this inaugural project, the team has since employed it for others. "From an installation standpoint, it's cut our labor in half, which frees up our time to spend on other aspects of a project," Storms says. Since bringing on Basic Configuration Services, Lifestyle Electronics has also noticed greater customer acceptance of their networking proposals. "When a network accounts for a bigger portion of a client's budget than they expect, the sticker shock can cause client disappointment," Storm relates. "*Basic Configuration Services provides validation of the expense through the eyes of a legitimate outside source. It seems to shut down the argument from clients; plus, builders love the fact that we are able to supply them with marked-up plans to keep the project on track.*"

As Lifestyle Electronics gains momentum with Access Networks, its reliance on Basic Configuration Services will likely lessen. No matter how proficient the team becomes with the brand, however, having the right support and service when and where they need is valuable to a technologically progressive integration firm like Lifestyle Electronics.