

Fast growing fast-casual store of the future

Donatos is a family-owned pizza company with locations in nine states and growing. Founded in Columbus, Ohio in 1963, the company consists of over 160 locations, including 55 company-owned stores and 105 franchise stores owned and operated by Franchise Partners. Donatos consistently exceeds national averages in fast-casual restaurant industry metrics, making it one of the fastest growing franchises in the United States.

As Donatos refocused efforts on growth and the customer experience, the company realized it needed to build a “store of the future” that provided the next generation IT platform to address specific business requirements.

Needing integrated systems for an incomparable customer experience, increased security, and streamlined deployment

Donatos’ multi-faceted ordering system included phone, web, and mobile customer ordering, with each order method critical to both sales and customer experience. The use of a single, cloud-based platform to support unified commerce for stores, mobile and the web was critical to employing technology that would enhance the customer experience.

To support this, Donatos required a new SD-WAN solution to seamlessly provide application Quality of Service (QoS) and redundant delivery across multiple, cost-effective internet circuits. This application had to continue to be available in the event the primary internet circuit was lost in the middle of a busy day.

For Donatos, a dropped or disconnected phone call means loss of revenue. Call QoS and circuit failover was required to protect each individual telephone food order. For holiday or sporting event peak times when Donatos could not live-answer every phone call, it needed cloud-based call queuing with a branded comfort messaging. A simple, easy to use system where an on-hold call could be picked up from any phone without complex call park or pickup codes was also required for Donatos’ busy fast casual food environment.

Donatos existing guest Wi-Fi experience was inconsistent across its footprint, and it needed to provide a safe, family- and child-friendly experience at each restaurant — whether checking sports scores, streaming a movie, or playing a game. The new guest Wi-Fi experience had to include a corporate branded sign-on page, rate limits to prevent excessive bandwidth use, and web filtering to control guest surfing risk.

DONATOS

INDUSTRY

Fast-casual restaurant

CUSTOMER

160 locations and growing across US

Headquartered in Columbus, OH

One of the fastest growing franchises in the US

CHALLENGES

Fragmented customer experience between /mobile/brick-and-mortar

Payment Card Industry (PCI) data compliance and other security requirements

Multiple vendors

Poor in-store guest Wi-Fi experience and control

Reliability, redundancy, and business continuity issues

Stretched internal IT resources affecting ability to deploy, track, and repair

SOLUTIONS

SD-WAN

Hosted UCaaS Telephony

LAN Network as a Service (NaaS)

RESULTS

Unified commerce and superior customer experience

Streamlined services with a single vendor

Exceptional voice/data service

Cost savings

Enhanced security and control

IT now able to focus on bigger strategic initiatives

"Parallel and CBTS became the single point of contact and the technology roadmap partner Donatos needed to build our Store of the Future," said Scott Stahlnaker, Director of IT Infrastructure for Donatos. "From supporting our corporate strategies for unified commerce and enhanced customer experience, to franchise growth, to streamlining the entirety of services and support to save us both money and time, the overall solution has certainly met our expectations."

Additionally, Donatos' PCI and corporate security needs demanded a next generation Unified Threat Management (UTM) firewall at every store. This store-level UTM solution had to provide for application control, identity based web filtering, and safe search. Multiple SSIDs and VLANs were needed to support security rules across guests, employees, point of sale, and visiting vendors.

Network technical requirements also dictated that the new solution run over Cable Broadband Internet as the primary circuit with 4G/LTE Wireless as the backup, and a new Power over Ethernet LAN switching environment. The entire solution needed to be anchored at the edge with an SD-WAN technology that provided QoS over the internet for point of sales, Cloud Voice, Office 365, and future cloud initiatives such as Azure or AWS.

From an operations standpoint, Donatos required every component and process to have a web-based portal for full user and admin self-control. Lastly, the entire solution had to be delivered as a monthly managed expense that supported Donatos co-management, provided 24/7/365 monitored support, including moves, adds, and changes, and required no up-front capital. The solution had to make IT's job easy yet give them increased control, reporting, and alerting.

160 LOCATIONS AND GROWING; A SINGLE, SIMPLIFIED COMMUNICATIONS SOLUTION

Along with CBTS, Parallel specially designed a suite of solutions as a service in order to meet all of Donatos' unique needs by combining CBTS's Hosted UCaaS Telephony, LAN Network as a Service (NaaS), SD-WAN, and Parallel's design overlay services. As part of the overall solution, CBTS procures all of the required hardware and software, provides technical and customer service from one support center, and bills all services as a monthly fee on a single invoice.

The suite of services provided to each Donatos location includes:

- Cisco Cloud UCaaS phone service over any internet connections
- SD-WAN to assure QoS for Voice, Cloud, and POS systems over any internet connection
- Per store call center capabilities to answer all overflow peak calls
- 4G Cellular failover in the event of any terrestrial internet service disruption
- Meraki UTM Firewall as a Service
- Meraki POE Ethernet Switches
- Meraki Wi-Fi Infrastructure with Guest Sign On
- Cloud management of all services

The solution also included on-site installation teams, professional project management, 24/7/365 on-shore technical support, on-site repair if needed, and all moves, adds, and changes included as part of the low monthly fee.

THE STORE OF THE FUTURE, AND BEYOND

The customized CBTS/Parallel solution ensures QoS, reliability and uptime for all facets of Donatos unified commerce to enhance Donatos' overall customer experience, all while meeting the rigorous compliance and security requirements for handling of sensitive consumer and corporate data. The use of a single vendor relieves Donatos of the need to maintain multiple projects along with multiple vendor relationships. And because the functionality is provided "As A Service", it has built-in protection against obsolescence, and can be easily tailored to meet specific needs and scale as the company continues to add locations.