Kjell & Company upgrades its analog audio system to IP with the help of an innovative solution from Axis.

Retail company gets the benefits of IP during gradual transition to a fully realized digital solution.

Organization:
Kjell & Company

Location:
Sweden

Industry segment:
Retail

Application:
Sales and merchandising, store management

Mission

The home electronics chain Kjell & Company wanted to enhance its audio capabilities by upgrading its analog audio solution to IP in all its 100 stores in Sweden. This would enable Kjell & Company to benefit from the advantages that an IP solution has to offer such as central control, while initially retaining its analog technology as it transitions to a full IP solution.

Solution

Kjell & Company installed AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge, which makes it possible to control audio and schedule playlists and in-store announcements, all while retaining an analog audio system. A central server streams music to the network audio bridge in each store. The network audio bridge then sends the music out to the analog speakers.

Result

Kjell & Company is thrilled with AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge, which has given the home electronics chain a future-proof solution with all the advantages of IP. AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge is easy to manage and control centrally, flexible when selecting content providers, and has made it possible for Kjell & Company to create a uniform audio experience in all its stores. This has helped to strengthen the brand, improve the customer experience, and increase sales.

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Cost-effective solution improves customer experience

Easy listening music at a comfortable volume flows out of home electronics chain Kjell & Company's store in the Stockholm suburb of Sickla, one of just over 100 Kjell & Company stores in Sweden. With almost 10,000 different products, Kjell & Company has the widest range of consumer electronics in the Nordic region.

Kjell & Company already has a surveillance system that utilises Axis' network cameras in its stores in Norway and Sweden. All of the stores have the same system for monitoring the cash register area, entrances and store shelves for the safety and security of the staff and customers. Approximately 1,100 Axis devices, including both cameras and audio products, are installed. It is a cost-effective and flexible solution with very good quality and stability.

Kjell & Company previously used in-store PCs to stream music. This was a challenging set-up, as the PCs were not dedicated to only managing daily music and were also used for many other daily tasks. This resulted in interruptions and instability.

Kjell & Company therefore wanted to further develop their audio concept and gradually transition to IP, without having to invest in and install a completely new IP solution. The best solution was therefore to expand on its existing analog audio solution. The benefits of IP that Kjell & Company wanted to take advantage of included: improved sound quality, remote access and control capabilities, central maintenance, configuration and easy management.

It was also important to Kjell & Company that the hardware was not locked to a specific music provider and that it could be integrated with existing IT systems.

"We wanted a standardized solution from a reliable supplier who we feel secure with," says Erik Ljungdahl, IT Manager of Kjell & Company.

Improved customer experience with music tailored to the target audience

Kjell & Company wanted to use music to create a more uniform environment and feel in their stores.

"It is important to offer customers the same experience in all of our stores. The scheduling of music and messages is essential, as is being able to start and turn off the audio centrally," says Erik Ljungdahl.

Studies show that having the right music in stores can enhance the customer experience and strengthen the brand, resulting in increased sales. Research also shows that consumer activity, mood and behaviour are positively affected by music. However, the choice of music is important to achieving the desired effect; playing background music that reflects the brand identity is critical to effectively achieving a significant sales boost. (Source: HUI Research: Effects of Brand-Fit Music on Consumer Behaviour)

"It is important that we are relevant to the customer. For us, this means that we provide a really good personal service and have a wide range of technological accessories," says Erik Ljungdahl.

Reliable and operationally stable solution

Kjell & Company installed an AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge, which makes it possible to control the audio with an IP solution while still retaining their analog amplifiers and speakers.

"We have been longing for a product like this for years! It is a simple and cost-effective solution that is easy to integrate with our existing systems. We hit the jackpot when it came."

"The icing on the cake was that it came from a supplier that we have a long-standing relationship with and great confidence in," says Erik Ljungdahl.

Support was another reason why Kjell & Company chose Axis. "Axis has a very knowledgeable, quick and helpful support team," says Erik Ljungdahl.

AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge is connected to an analog audio system and analog speaker, with configuration and maintenance handled centrally. Central control means it is easier to change channels or playlists, for example, regardless of the number of stores and other organizational units involved.

All stores in Sweden and Norway use the same music playlist, while voice announcements and other audio communication (offers, campaigns, which products are in stock, and commercials and information to customers) are adapted and tailored to each store. Prerecorded voice announcements can be scheduled, and information can be played live.

"Because we have so many stores, we wanted a future-proof, reliable solution of high quality and good security," says Erik Ljungdahl.

The rollout of AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge in all stores is underway. Kjell & Company currently has three different types of audio solutions in their stores – an analog system, a system where the analog system is supplemented with AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge, and a system that includes Axis network-connected speakers. The audio solution can also be connected to the alarm system and network surveillance cameras.

Kjell & Company has also installed AXIS Device Manager, which enables simple, cost-effective and secure management of all devices. This allows operators to improve cybersecurity, as well as the management of accounts and passwords. AXIS Device Manager can manage thousands of devices in multiple locations.

"AXIS Device Manager is great! AXIS Device Manager is invaluable if you have a lot of stores and offices as it lets you centrally update many different devices in a single system at the same time, regardless of where they are located. This means you are guaranteed to have the latest software in all devices, which contributes to better IT security," says Erik Ljungdahl.

"We are constantly impressed that Axis can make good products better. Each new version is better than the one before it. The common thread is simplicity. The products and solutions are easy to manage, and it is easy to apply updates even if thousands of products are involved," says Erik Ljungdahl.

Transition to IP at its own pace

Kjell & Company is very pleased with AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge.

"AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge is easy to install and manage, and updates can be done centrally for all stores, from Trelleborg to Luleå. The hardware is standardized and easy to integrate with the existing solution. It is also flexible in terms of choice of music content providers," says Erik Ljungdahl.

Kjell & Company also appreciates the stylish design of the devices. "Axis has been really successful with this," says Erik Ljungdahl.

The new audio solution has helped to create a pleasant environment in the stores with a uniform audio experience, which helps to strengthen the brand, improve the customer experience, and increase sales.

"I really recommend the Axis audio solution to other stores," says Erik Ljungdahl.

About Kjell & Company

With approximately 1,000 employees, Kjell & Company has over 100 stores in Sweden and 15 stores in Norway. Its headquarters are in Malmö. Kjell & Company is owned by the Dahnelius family who founded the company, together with its senior executives and the principal owner FSN Capital.

About AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge

AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge is a smart and easy solution that connects and combines analog systems with network audio systems. AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge is based on an open standard and is easy to install and integrate with other IT technologies – it combines the best of both worlds. Analog audio sources can be connected to Axis network speakers, and any digital music source can be connected to an analog speaker system. This enables businesses to play music from mobile phones, computers, music streaming boxes, and more. With ports for both analog and digital connections, AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge lets analog speaker systems act as a single system with an Axis network audio system. Businesses receive all the benefits of a network audio system, and can make the move from an analog system to a network audio system at their own pace. AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge is small and light, has a discreet design, and is flexible and easily positioned. A single AXIS C8033 Network Audio Bridge is all that is required to manage hundreds of speakers, making it a truly cost-effective solution. Smart audio zones can be used to play specific music and play announcements to selected speakers. Configuration and maintenance are handled centrally.

About Axis Communications

Axis enables a smarter and safer world by creating network solutions that provide insights for improving security and new ways of doing business. As the industry leader in network video, Axis offers products and services for video surveillance and analytics, access control, and audio systems. Axis has more than 3,000 dedicated employees in over 50 countries and collaborates with partners worldwide to deliver customer solutions. Axis was founded in 1984 and has its headquarters in Lund, Sweden.

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