



Sweet mobile signal solution in a Hotel Chocolat distribution centre

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Cel-Fi QUATRA provides sweet mobile connectivity across all networks at Hotel Chocolat's Alpha distribution centre.

Background

Hotel Chocolat promises to fulfil every delivery on time every time. Employees were experiencing dropped calls and poor data connection inside the distribution centre due to the materials used on the outside of the building. During the expansion into the adjacent building which further increased the size of the distribution centre, Hotel Chocolate addressed the issue of in-building mobile connectivity.



The Business

Hotel Chocolat is one of the UK's greatest success stories and was voted the 'Most Advocated British Brand' in 2012. Founded on principles of originality, authenticity and ethics, they started selling chocolates online in 1993. Today, their global footprint extends to sustainable cocoa farms, over 125 retail shops, cafes, tasting rooms, a hotel and restaurants. Key to their success is their constant innovative growth initiatives and their innate ability to fulfill orders and deliveries to the right person at the right time.

In August 2020, the chocolatier created 200 new jobs by increasing the production and distribution capacity of its operations at their 'Alpha' distribution centre in St Neots, Cambridgeshire. The floor size nearly doubled when they took over and expanded into a neighbouring warehouse.



The Challenge

The warehouse at St Neots is a hive of activity. It houses distribution operations, a small production area for chocolate-making, offices for administrative employees and a factory

retail outlet store. After expanding into the neighbouring warehouse, the extended 'Alpha' distribution centre is over 20,000 m² in size.

Many of the employees are not desk-bound and move around the warehouse to ensure every order and delivery is fulfilled timeously. The noise generated by trucks and forklifts moving around results in employees wearing protective ear coverings, rendering tannoy communication ineffective. The business has moved to use text messages to deliver all internal and operation messages to employees. The need for stable and reliable mobile signal is therefore imperative.

The distribution centre is covered in metal cladding which presents a classic Faraday cage setting. Coupled with the sheer vastness of the distribution centre, mobile signal inside the building was poor. Employees were unable to use their mobile devices to make a phone call, receive a text or download a communication unless they stepped outside.

Hotel Chocolat had previously attempted to resolve the mobile signal issues by installing network-provided boosters. Although it initially provided some marginal improvements in certain areas of the building, much of the warehouse still suffered from no coverage. After the expansion, the size of the building presented an additional challenge that the network-provided boosters could not resolve.

Hotel Chocolat identified that that mobile connectivity would be imperative for their operational efficiency and contacted Frequency Telecom to provide them with a legal, all network solution which covered the entire warehouse.

The Solution and Result

Hotel Chocolat found Frequency Telecom on an online search. From the outset, their requirements were clear; the solution had to be legal, it had to cover all networks and it had to cover the entire warehouse.

The process Frequency follows to find a solution is straight-forward. It starts with consultations with the client to determine their business requirements and timelines. After

in-depth analysis of the site, building and layout plans, an initial solution would be presented, but it would be subject to a site inspection.



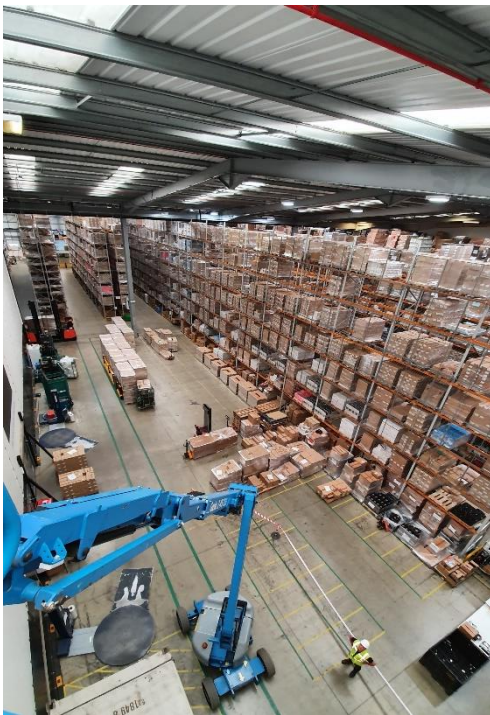
Colin Giles, Sales Manager at [Frequency Telecom](#) explains, “For a building of this magnitude, a site inspection is vital. In our experience, unless it is a new build and the mobile signal solution is part of the construction project plan, every building has hidden challenges which can cause installation and deployment problems. It is only when you set foot inside a building when you can see what the site and building plans can’t tell you.”

CEL-FI. QUATRA



The site survey at St Neots concluded that there was very little or no mobile signal within the distribution centre but sufficiently good signal outside. The Cel-Fi QUATRA solution was presented as the solution to deliver the level of mobile coverage required across all networks. This solution comprised of:

- 12 x Network Units (NUs)
- 44 x Coverage Units (CUs)
- 8 x external MIMO antennas



Frequency contracted ZoneWave to perform the installation. The installation was overseen by the main contractor WSP who also controlled the strict HSE requirements for the site.

The CU's were all mounted on boards, and the boards hung from various RSJs using a Gripple wire and Clutch system. Due to the size of the facility, the donor location was split to facilitate minimal cable CAT6 lengths from the NUs to each of the CU locations.

Installation was completed in under 2 weeks and the warehouse was now enjoying full signal across the whole expanse.

Feedback following the installation has been very positive. Aside from enjoying faster data speeds on their mobile devices and voice calls no longer dropping, Hotel Chocolat employees have particularly mentioned the joy of not having to step outside just to make a

call. Employees can now connect to team conference calls on their mobile devices which they have never been able to do before.



At Zonewave our combined experience spans over 50 years in the telecoms industry. Zonewave are proud to have provided signal solutions for prestigious clients such as The Royal Opera House, The Government Legal Department, and Warner Media.

Zonewave believes that the highest quality solutions deserve the highest quality installations. Point of sale connectivity, free to roam data collection, WHSE automation, IoT enablement, and patient data availability are just some of the reasons our clients have chosen our solutions.

Additional information is available at ZoneWave.co.uk, on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



Established in 2002, Frequency employs over 60 people, across the UK, Germany and the Netherlands. Frequency Telecom is the master distributor of Nextivity's Cel-Fi range of mobile signal boosters in the UK and Ireland. Cel-Fi products are licence-exempt and fully meets the regulatory requirements in the UK (Ofcom SI 2018/399) and Ireland (ComReg S.I.No.283 of 2018).

The Cel-Fi commitment is to protect the operator's network, deliver the best in-building mobile performance, and be the easiest solution to install.

Frequency has successfully installed indoor mobile signal solutions at the NHS, Pure Offices, BBC, Hotel Chocolat, Lincoln Epic Showground, Premier League and many others.

See our [product range here](#).

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