



### LaSalle Solutions finds answers, savings for Crate & Barrel

*Every time upscale home store Crate & Barrel opens another location, it has to add more routers & switches. With 145 locations nationwide, and more being added every year, it's imperative that the company's equipment be reliable, up-to-date and available whenever and wherever it's needed. In today's widespread and highly competitive markets, routers & switches are the link that ensures both customer satisfaction and corporate success.*

#### The Challenge

Crate & Barrel primarily uses Cisco routers in its stores. The hardware wasn't causing any particular problems, but keeping track of maintenance schedules on every piece of that hardware was becoming a headache.

"Every time we opened a store, we had to try to record the maintenance timeframe on paper," says Lou Tucker,

Director of Technology for the company.

"And every time we opened a store, the timeframe changed. We really needed to improve our ability to manage our assets and the maintenance agreements."

Similarly, cumbersome paper records made it

difficult for the company to be sure it notified manufacturers of any updates or changes,

as required for maintenance agreements. And, although Crate & Barrel wasn't having trouble finding the hardware it required, like any company it was always on the lookout for better pricing.

#### The Solution

Understanding that managing equipment requires more than a paper log book, LaSalle Solutions introduced LAMP, one of the industry's first online information technology asset management portals.

"LAMP allowed us to put all the maintenance agreements and router information in a database that we can access through the portal," Tucker says. "It is working very well, and we now have better control of our maintenance agreements. Other vendors approached us when we were having problems, but we chose LaSalle because of LAMP. No one else had anything like it at the time."

LAMP is one of LaSalle's core strengths, and comes backed by an administrative team that assumes the burden of keeping manufacturers informed of any updates or changes clients may have.

"We provide the processes, methodology and inside account team to update any moves and changes in clients' LAMP databases," says Jonathan Cohen, Senior Account Executive for LaSalle. "We make sure that if a device goes down, the manufacturers will have the proper part in their depot centers so our clients get the maintenance services they're paying for."

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**Lou Tucker**  
Director of Technology  
Crate & Barrel



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LaSalle ensures that clients pay only for the services that they need, working with the manufacturers to procure credits for maintenance on decommissioned devices.

“One key benefit LaSalle brought to our attention was that if you have an active maintenance contract and then you decide to upgrade or decommission a piece of equipment, you may be eligible for credit for the unused maintenance,” says Robert Hamm, IT Purchaser and Asset Coordinator. “Most vendors aren’t going to tell you that, but LaSalle went after these SMARTnet credits and saved us a lot of money right off the bat.”

LaSalle provides the same exemplary service on hardware orders, including trade-ins.

“We’ll pick up equipment they’re returning so that they don’t have to ship it, and we’ll get equipment shipped overnight if they need it immediately,” Cohen says. “We work through distributors so we are able to get the equipment out the same day in most cases.”

In addition, a LaSalle engineer works with Crate & Barrel personnel not only to facilitate upgrades to routers, switches, wireless components and core routing and switching, but also to help the company’s staff with design assistance.

**The Results**

With LAMP, Crate & Barrel is able to track

and manage Cisco’s SMARTnet-supported hardware, as well as non-Cisco equipment and equipment for which no maintenance agreement is necessary. The portal helps the firm manage its in-house sparing program as well by tracking the parts available in storage for company-performed maintenance.

“With LAMP I can add equipment and update files, I can customize notes and change records to reflect whatever service level I want,” Hamm says. “Another key benefit is that it allows me to see pricing and any changes in the history and to trace those changes back to see what’s correct. I haven’t seen any tool better than LAMP. LaSalle is the only vendor I’d add services from.”

The savings Crate & Barrel realized by turning to LaSalle for hardware and maintenance has been even more impressive.

“We’re seeing savings of up to 15 percent or 20 percent over past purchases,” he says. “We have somewhere in the neighborhood of 300 Cisco assets, and it keeps growing because we add stores every year. That means the savings can really mount up.”

For the foreseeable future, LaSalle and Crate & Barrel will remain partners, Tucker and Hamm agree.

“Other vendors have offered their services, but we have a relationship with LaSalle,” Tucker says. “We’re working with the people who actually develop their programs, and that counts for a lot.”

LaSalle gives Crate & Barrel the equipment pricing and centralized point of control for asset management the ever-growing company needs to stay abreast of its IT program – and its competitors.



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**Robert Hamm**  
IT Purchaser and  
Asset Coordinator  
Crate & Barrel

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**For more information about how LaSalle Solutions can help optimize your equipment financing and management needs, contact us at 847.823.9600.**